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# PLAY



TM

ISSUE  
259



METAL GEAR SOLID V



ASSASSIN'S CREED

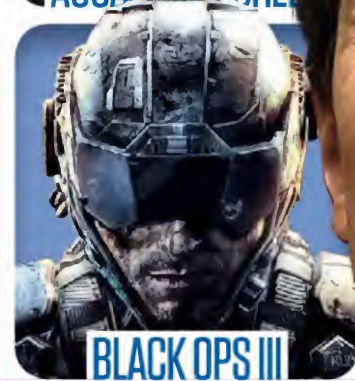


FINAL FANTASY VII



HORIZON ZERO DAWN

**100**  
PS4  
GAMES RATED



BLACK OPS III



RAINBOW SIX SIEGE



STAR WARS  
BATTLEFRONT

THE LAST  
GUARDIAN

Sony unleashes the beast!  
Meet the monster exclusive  
nearly a decade in the making

## GAMING'S BEST LINE-UP EVER

LEGENDS RETURN AND HEROES ARE BORN ON PS4



UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END



KINGDOM HEARTS III



STREET FIGHTER V

+ SOUTH PARK: THE FRACTURED BUT WHOLE  
UNTIL DAWN SHENMUE III GUITAR HERO LIVE  
STREET FIGHTER V RATCHET & CLANK FALLOUT 4  
DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING DARK SOULS III UNRAVEL  
THE WITNESS NEED FOR SPEED FOR HONOR & MORE!



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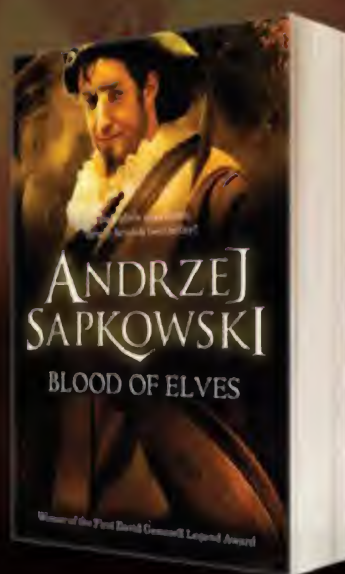
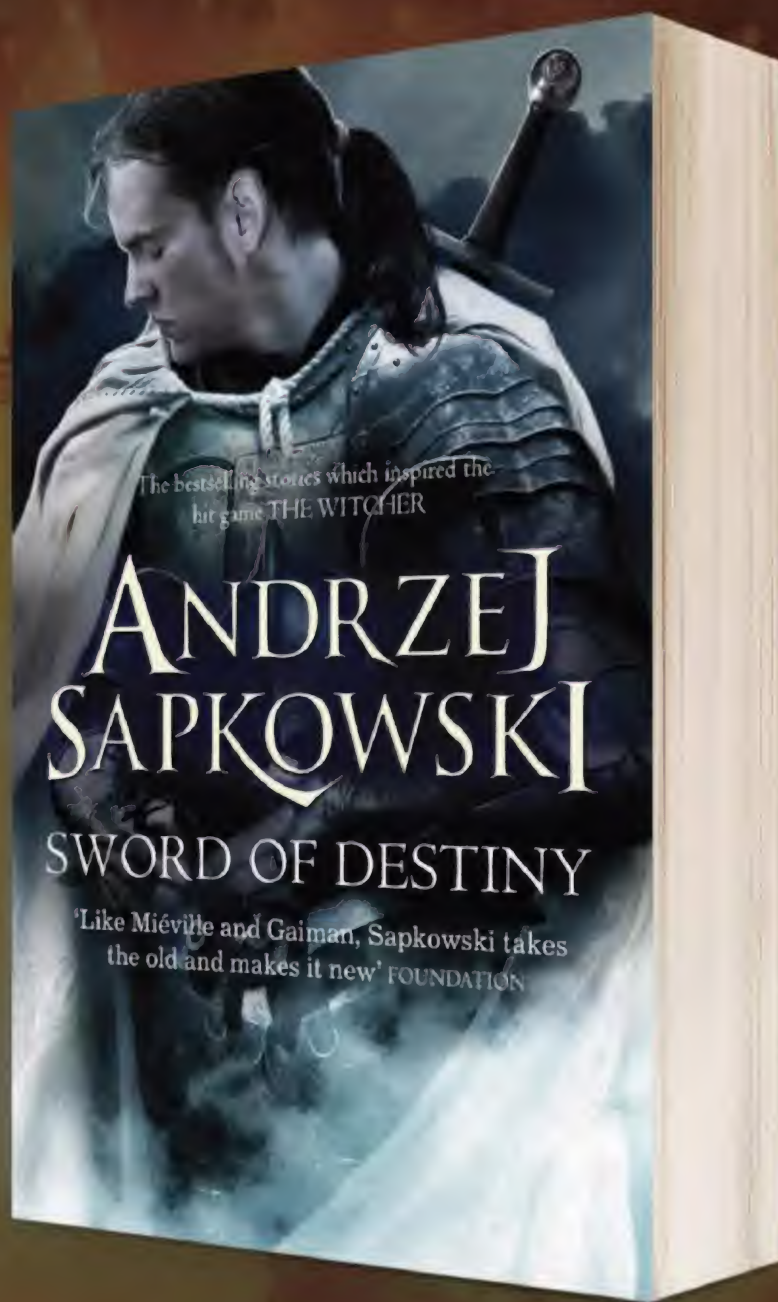


VR TECH  
TESTED

Discover the first wave of  
Morpheus games as we  
prepare for a VR revolution



# Discover the bestselling books that inspired **THE WITCHER**





# PS4 PS3 Vita PSN WelcomePLAY

The UK's only independent PlayStation magazine



## LIVING THE DREAM



**THIS YEAR**, I became part of the problem. That could probably use a little context, actually, so allow me to offer it. Few things rattle my cage in this industry more

than seeing so-called professionals lose their shit at every minor announcement that comes out of a games conference. Some of our peers simply can't contain themselves when they see a man holding two guns instead of one or hear a predictable release date, erupting into fits of whooping and hollering that wouldn't be out of place in the front rows of a One Direction crowd. It's not like I'm jaded or cynical or anything like that – I too can get excited about reveals and announcements, but I actually have control over my body and can let the hype wash over me rather than screaming about it like a toddler.

Well, I say 'can' but in truth, 'could' would be more accurate. As I sat watching Sony's E3 conference, it's fair to say I wasn't ready for the tactical bombardment that was to follow. In my defence, shouting about a long-lost project like *The Last Guardian* or a mythical creature like Square's *FFVII* remake is a little different to screaming when it's announced that a new *COD* game will be out in November (WOO!) or will have DLC (YEAH!), plus it's not like I intend to make a habit of it. If anything, it just speaks volumes about the quality of the surprises Sony brought to the party that they were even able to shatter so thick a shell as mine. It was insane, and I doubt we'll ever see anything like it again.

I'd love to be proven wrong, of course, and Gamescom is just around the corner. But after the E3 Conference Of Dreams, can we really expect another blowout? Well, we weren't expecting *Shenmue III*, *The Last Guardian*, the long-rumoured *FFVII* remake or in fact pretty much any of the awesome games you're about to read about either, so never say never...

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

**LUKE ALBIGÉS**  
EDITOR  
@LukemonMGJ  
PSN: PorthMinster

**CURRENTLY PLAYING**  
*Batman: Arkham Knight*

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**THIS IS FOR  
THE PLAYERS**

Amazing exclusives as  
far as the eye can see

**PLAY**  
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Even Drake is surprised by how good Sony's line-up is...

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The best just got better



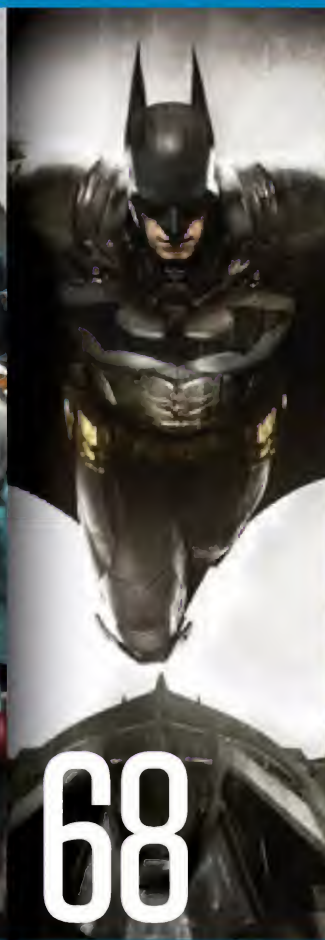
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Heading to PS4, and fuzzier than ever



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# THIS IS FOR THE PLAYERS

Discover the first-party projects and amazing exclusives that make PS4's future look brighter than ever before. But when are we going to find time to play all these awesome games?





# THE LAST GUARDIAN

Sony proves that dreams can come true

It's *actually* happening. The game that's disappointed us so many times since its 2009 reveal with repeated delays and notable absences is actually going to get released. It's coming to PS4 and it's coming in 2016. If you don't really get why people are so excited about that fact, then let us remind you that it is being made by Japan Studio, the team behind some of the greatest PlayStation games of all-time in the form of *Shadow Of The Colossus* and *Ico*.

You can see something of the spirit of those titles in *The Last Guardian*, a game that's about the friendship between the young boy that you control and a gigantic dog/bird/cat type thing called Trico. Wonderful animation brings both characters to life, with Trico in particular becoming instantly adorable when you see some of its (we don't know Trico's gender) dog- and cat-like gestures.

To progress through the crumbling ruins in which the game is set, you must communicate with

Trico, asking it to jump across a gap and then catch you when you make the same leap, for example. There is potential in the idea that you're dependent on another creature with their own volition for some really interesting gameplay scenarios to emerge and for a relationship with a creature that we've already fallen for to develop.

If there is one concern, it's that *The Last Guardian* has languished in development hell for so long and that its design could show its age as a result – after all, this was originally meant to be a PS3 game. But this is a studio with an excellent track record, so we're prepared to give the team the benefit of the doubt. Indeed, what we have seen so far reminds us of the magic those aforementioned Japan Studio classics had, so we're hopeful that its new game can match up to the anticipation.







## TEAM PICKS

**LUKE ALBIGÉS**

**TRANSFORMERS: DEVASTATION**

Don't look at me like that. I know what you're thinking: 'All those great announcements and that chump chose a *freaking Transformers game*?' Yes, this chump definitely did. Letting the best action game developer on the planet right now loose with my childhood was only going to end well for me and Platinum's take on the property makes Michael Bay's big-budget market stall knock-offs look even worse. Somehow. It already looks amazing and plays brilliantly – if *The Touch* (or *Dare*, for that matter) kicks in during a boss battle, I am going to absolutely lose my shit.







△○×□ Who would have thought that grappling onto a moving truck would end in pain?



## UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

The hero PlayStation 4 deserves

Nathan Drake has been punched, kicked, shot at and drugged. He's fought terrorists, mercenaries, mutants and ghouls. Now, he's getting old and he's reaching the end of his rope, but he seems to have time for one more turn of gallivanting around the world looking for lost treasure in him. *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End* is indeed the end of an era for a seasoned videogame franchise, its developer Naughty Dog, and the PlayStation family of consoles it has called home. We're going to hate seeing *Uncharted* go, but we bet we're going to love watching Nathan Drake bow out.

The E3 demo packed everything we could have wanted into a brief seven-minute gameplay demo, mixing action with the franchise's trademark wit and banter. The opening scene sets the stage perfectly, giving us both Sully and Drake in one of their normal back-and-forth conversations. The dialogue is crisp and paced perfectly, once again showing off Naughty Dog's incredible writing skills. As the two make their way through a crowded marketplace the tone becomes tenser and more direct, and all of that is conveyed by the way Drake and Sully talk to one another.

The rest of the demo hinged on the elaborate car chase scene we all witnessed, and while we enjoyed the great action

sequences and the multiple strained remarks from Drake and Sully when the truck keeps reappearing, we had hoped we would see some exploration aspects of the new game. Past *Uncharted* titles featured wonderful tomb-like settings to explore, and we get that a show like E3 requires high-energy clips like the chase scene. We hope *Uncharted 4* will feature more areas with deep exploration.

While the stage demo ended with Drake colliding with the wooden pylon, the extended demo continued with Drake being dragged through mud, commandeering an enemy vehicle and trying to evade capture, then a spectacular crash that leaves Drake trapped in the car followed by a marvellous escape scene. The true combat of *Uncharted 4* reveals itself in this later section of the demo, showing off crazy ways in which the game forces us to dispatch enemies. Drake must shoot bad guys while being dragged behind the gun truck or as soon as he frees himself from the totalled car mentioned above, and scenes like that show Naughty Dog is trying to top the action of previous games. We don't know how many other games feature aiming and shooting enemies while riding on the back of a motorcycle, but *Uncharted 4* makes it look stupidly fun and natural.

The graphical prowess of *Uncharted 4* is on full display throughout the demo, from the animations of the characters moving through that first crowded marketplace to the mud that cakes onto Drake's clothes as he slides through it in the extended demo. If we were to go outside and slide through a mud puddle like Nathan Drake, we'd bet that our clothes would look exactly like his – yet another testament to the wizardry at work in the game. Elements like the fire that starts to consume Drake's vehicle and illuminates the path that to his freedom is but another great example of this game's beauty.

Like we said earlier, *A Thief's End* marks the end of a major storyline in PlayStation history. There may be no Nathan Drake after all is said and done, so we have to appreciate what we see today in preparation for the game's 2016 launch. The game is beautiful in every way, the action is as tense and high-octane as it's always been, and the character development in these brief ten minutes surpasses most action movies. New characters like Drake's brother Sam will keep us on our toes, as we'll never know who or what will be coming around the next corner. The end of an era is nigh, and we're happy to follow Drake along the ride to his departure.



**THIS  
IS FOR THE  
BELIEVERS**



△×□ Seeing Midgar spruced up with modern graphics is a real treat for us *FFVII* fans.

# FINAL FANTASY VII

No, really. It's actually happening...

WHEN SONY ANNOUNCED that the original version of the beloved *Final Fantasy VII* would be coming to PS4 at PlayStation Experience, it seemed like the dream of the full-on remake that fans have been clamouring for was dead. But now, Sony has announced that *Final Fantasy VII* is getting a proper remake and it is coming to PS4 – you can't get much more of a crowd-pleaser than that!

There are still so many questions to be answered about the game, though. Will it be voiced? Will the translations be updated, or

will Square stick with what us Westerners know and love? Will it tweak the combat system or stick to the classic turn-based one we are familiar with? Will there be new sections added to the game?

We want answers to those questions, but for now, we're high on seeing Midgar and the fuzzy feeling we get from seeing fans happy, so we don't mind waiting.

If you're a *Final Fantasy VII* veteran or even a newcomer, this could just turn out to be the best piece of fan service of all time. Please don't mess this up, Square!



## TEAM PICKS

**DREW SLEEP**

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

This year's E3 was simply the gift that kept on giving. Although the *FFVII* announcement made me implode with emotional joy, I kind of had a feeling it would happen at some point. Therefore, *Star Wars: Battlefront* won E3 for me – that gameplay footage was nothing short of flawless. DICE has managed to nail the *Star Wars* feel perfectly. What absolutely clinched it for me, though, was that appearance from Admiral Ackbar in the co-op gameplay footage. This is going to be amazing.



THIS  
IS FOR THE  
BACKERS

# SHENMUE III

With the fans' support, a cult classic returns

We said that you can't get a much bigger crowd-pleaser than *Final Fantasy VII*... well, how about the game that everyone wanted, but that no one thought would ever *actually* happen? We are talking, of course, about *Shenmue III*, a game that has been perennially rumoured to appear but that everyone doubted was ever a realistic possibility, along with the likes of *Half-Life 3* and a *Final Fantasy VII* remake. Hang on...

Finally, after being left hanging at the end of *Shenmue II* 14 years ago, Ryo Hazuki's story can continue and we can get our revenge on Lan Di! Unfortunately, we'll have to wait until the tail end of 2017 to play, but that's fine; we're just happy *Shenmue III* is actually a thing. It's worth mentioning that *Shenmue III* is a Kickstarter project, but you don't have to worry about it getting funded. It only took approximately nine hours for director Yu Suzuki to smash his \$2 million target. We're hardly surprised, given that there's a contingent of *Shenmue*'s fan base that's been campaigning for the return of this cult classic for years.

In case any of you younger readers are baffled as to why people go so crazy for *Shenmue*, the game did things that blew everyone away back when it released. Things that are now commonplace, like day/night cycles, weather and events that only happened at certain times of the day were a revelation and contributed to making it immersive in a way that we hadn't experienced before.

We doubt that *Shenmue III* is going to be ahead of its time, but another helping of that blend of action, adventure and RPG gameplay with a modern twist and a conclusion to the series' story is enough for us.

"RYO HAZUKI'S STORY CAN CONTINUE AND WE CAN GET OUR REVENGE ON LAN DI"



△○×□ Wandering off in the forest with Shenmue is where we left off at the end of *Shenmue II*.



# HORIZON ZERO DAWN

Guerrilla kills it with a brave new vision

We had more questions than answers about *Horizon Zero Dawn* after its big debut. What are these giant mechanical monsters and why are they so hostile? What do they have that the human hunters need? Frankly, what the bloody hell is going on here? After some time with an extended demo presented by a member of the Guerrilla team, we think we now know what we're getting ourselves into.

One of *Horizon*'s biggest draws lies in its open world, which Guerrilla says reaches out as far as the eye can see. If it appears in our view then the game's heroine, Aloy, can reach it. Every inch of that world will be filled with flora and fauna and the robotic beasts that we witness Aloy engage in battle. The demo introduced us to some of these new foes, from the smaller reptilian machines to the giant creatures that filled the screen as they appeared.

These creatures all have unique names and characteristics, even though we only got to see one in any real action. Grazers are smaller creatures that can call for help if threatened, like the poor guy we see Aloy forced to take out via stealth kill in the demo. Longnecks are the robots that are walking by in the background, and we shudder to think what battling a behemoth like that will entail. If it's anything like the fight against

the T-Rex-shaped Thunderjaw from the demo, we'll have our work cut out for us.

The Thunderjaw charges at Aloy with reckless abandon, trying to trample her under its massive feet. Being a machine, it also has access to some incredible firepower, launching explosive discs at Aloy from its back. These discs can make a lasting impact on the environment too, as we see a few rocks Aloy uses for cover blown to smithereens from a well-placed disc shot. The Thunderjaw fights with the primal urges of a dinosaur and the calculated precision of a robot, as if it's a sentient AI that knows what form it has taken. We're afraid that all of the game's enemies will share this hyper-intelligence, because if they do then we'll have a hell of a time fighting them all.

While this enemy seems daunting, Aloy is no slouch in combat herself. She's adept with a bow, using different types of arrows to her advantage in the battle. Electric arrows stun the Thunderjaw, while armour-piercing and explosive arrows slowly damage the beast. Eventually, a well-timed arrow knocks the disc launcher loose, allowing Aloy to

pick it up and use it herself. Once enough damage has been inflicted, Aloy can switch to her cable launcher to pin the Thunderjaw to the ground, forcing it into submission.

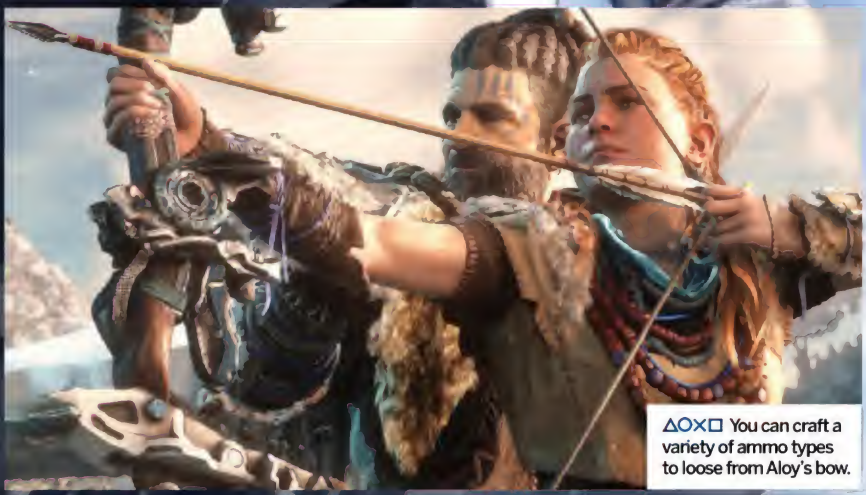
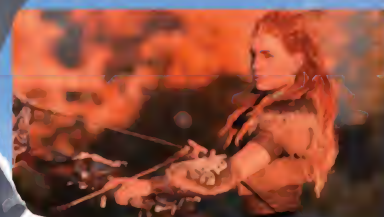
The battle is fierce, but, again, we ask ourselves one central question: why? What is so valued on these creatures that Aloy must hunt them? It turns out the answer lies on their backs in tanks of what is called 'biofuel', resources gathered by the machines and turned into a type of fuel resource. These creatures appear to be a product of a past civilization which looks suspiciously like Earth in the present day, needing its resources to fuel their existence, and Aloy must retrieve the fuel in order to stop the scourge and perhaps bring some normality into the world.

Guerrilla Games has been biding its time, waiting for the best opportunity to unleash its new IP onto the world's stage. E3 was its moment to shine, and *Horizon Zero Dawn*'s debut stuck out in our minds even with the other megaton announcements shared at Sony's media briefing. We still have a few questions about this world, and *Horizon* looks to answer them by taking us into a whole new world where a primitive people battle technology. We'd be lying if we said we're not intrigued.

"ALOY IS NO SLOUCH IN COMBAT. SHE'S ADEPT WITH A BOW, USING DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARROWS TO HER ADVANTAGE"



**THIS**  
IS FOR THE  
**HUNTERS**



△○×□ You can craft a variety of ammo types to loose from Aloy's bow.

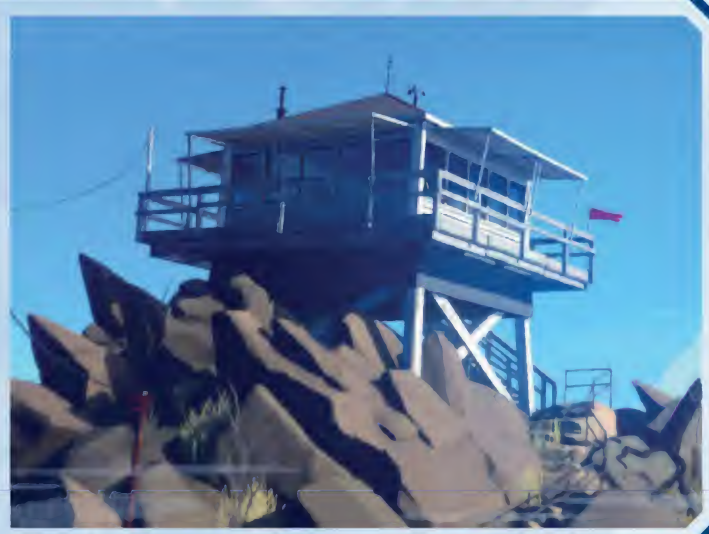


## TEAM PICKS

### PAUL WALKER-EMIG

#### FIREWATCH

My initial thoughts on *Firewatch* was that it looked a bit like *Gone Home* in a forest. That was immediately appealing to me, because *Gone Home* is one of my favourite games. The fact it looks absolutely spectacular also helped, of course, as did the appeal of exploring the wilderness while chatting with a companion on a radio about the game's mysterious goings-on. Finding out that it is being directed and written by the co-writers of the first season of Telltale's *The Walking Dead* sealed the deal. For those reasons, I was delighted to see a PS4 release of *Firewatch* announced.





# THIS IS FOR THE CREATORS

## DREAMS

A new frontier for creativity

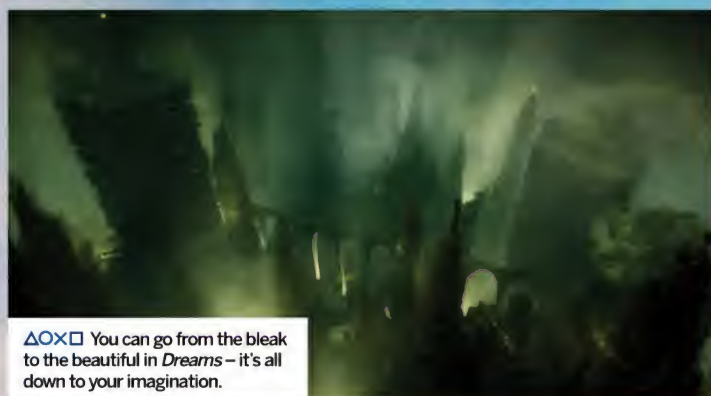
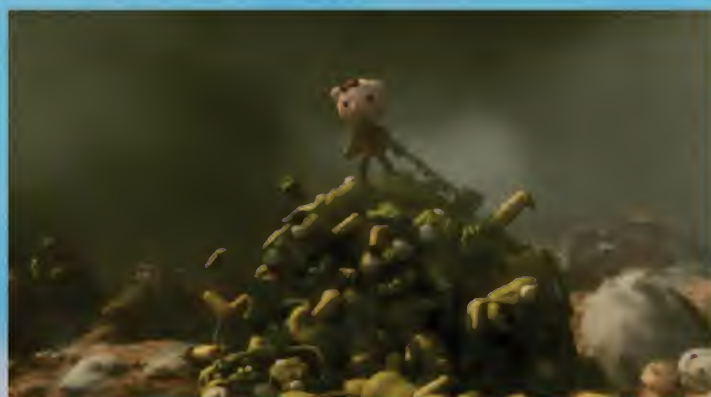
We don't really get what *Dreams* is, but it looks lovely. The game is being developed by Media Molecule, the team behind *LittleBigPlanet* and *Tearaway*, so naturally, it's being built around creation. The pitch for *Dreams* is that you can sketch your own dream-like scenarios using the PS4 controller's motion capabilities and can take and remix elements from other players' dreams to add to your own. Once you're done putting it together, you can then animate it to bring it to life as a puppeteer would their puppets.

Whether *Dreams* has any game-like elements, or is just about the joy of creation and the experience of wandering through the imagination of other players to see what scenarios have sprung from their minds isn't clear yet. Our instinct is that it's going to take the kind of talent we don't have to create something truly compelling in *Dreams* and we're not the only ones that barrier is

likely to put off. Still, the diversity and beauty of what we've seen of *Dreams*, from claymation-like shorts, to sweeping sci-fi chases, has us intrigued.

We're tempted by the prospect of wandering freely through dreamscapes that surprise, delight and even confuse us, but whether that dream can actually be realised in the game proper is something that's going to depend on the accessibility and flexibility of the creation tools that Media Molecule is creating, as well as what players actually decide to do with them.

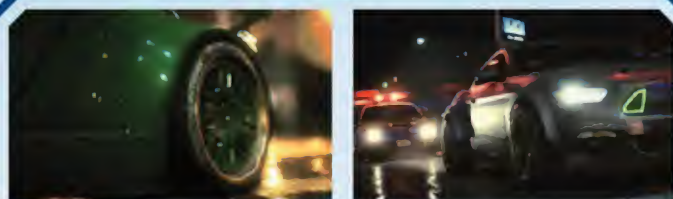
What we are saying is that fantasy doesn't always match up with reality, so while we're interested in the concept of *Dreams*, there are plenty of questions about how it will work in practice. Having said that, this is the year that a *Final Fantasy VII* remake and *Shenmue III* were announced, so there's never been a better time for Media Molecule's dream to come true.



△○×□ You can go from the bleak to the beautiful in *Dreams* – it's all down to your imagination.







## TEAM PICKS

**LIAM WARR**

**NEED FOR SPEED**

I was so damn disappointed with *The Crew* last year. I played it for a weekend after its release and, frankly, it was just dreadful. I still feel dirty for playing it for that long. However, *Need For Speed* looks like it's going to be everything I hoped *The Crew* would be. Not only does it look outstanding graphically but it's gone back to the modification system from the likes of *Underground*. It just needs a DeLorean I can drive and I'd officially be able to call this Game Of The Forever.



△×□ All your resource are belong to us... or anyone else who happens to turn up on that planet before us.

# NO MAN'S SKY

A universe without limits

We've always said that *No Man's Sky* and its 18,446,744,073,709,551,616 planets represents an incredible technical achievement. We've always been interested in the idea of seeing things that no-one else in the world, including the game's designers, has ever seen before and what that might add to the joy of exploration. What we've always questioned is what *No Man's Sky* will actually be like to play, whether you can do anything within that huge universe that makes it compelling, whether it can offer anything aside from being very, very big.

Well, now we've actually got to see a little bit of gameplay. There was a very quick look at space combat, which in truth, we didn't see enough of to make any significant judgement on, before we got to see a bit of gameplay on a planet's surface. Before landing on the surface, though, it bears mentioning that you can scan planets to reveal points of interest, including a beacon where you can upload any discoveries that you've made. Once you're on the planet, you can perform a further scan to find new wildlife, or take to mining for resources using your handheld laser tool – it's simply

a case of pointing and shooting to make those resources yours.

One of our worries about *No Man's Sky* was that, while the universe you're let loose in might be huge, it would actually be incredibly sparse when it comes to things to do. Seeing how easy it is to travel to new planets, jump into space battles and find points of interest to investigate helps to allay some of our fears about the game.

*No Man's Sky* is an ambitious game with an incredible concept. If Hello Games can pull it off, it could just turn out to be one of the defining games of this generation.





# EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

## DESTINY

Going large with the biggest expansion yet

When *Destiny's The Taken King* expansion launches on 15 September, it's going to bring with it a bunch of content that will only be available on PlayStation. That will include gear sets for all three classes – Hesperos for Titans, Azoth Bend for Warlocks and Neuroghast for Hunters – and a new Exotic scout rifle called The Jade Rabbit. There will also be more substantial additions. Firstly, there's Echo Chamber, an exclusive Vex-themed Strike and there is Sector 618, a new competitive multiplayer map.



## DISNEY INFINITY 3.0

Feeling the force first on PlayStation 4

While *Battlefront* is unquestionably the main event when it comes to *Star Wars* in 2015, let's not forget that *Star Wars* will also be a key part of *Disney Infinity 3.0*, and that there will be playsets based on the original and prequel trilogies.

If you fancy getting both, there is a limited edition *Star Wars* starter pack that will be exclusive to PS4 and PS3 that features the two. It's also worth noting that it includes an exclusive Boba Fett figurine that will only be available in the starter pack.



△○×□ Something tells us there won't be any Jar Jar Binks figures to go with 3.0.



## CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III

A beta to make you a bow-liever (sorry)

While it's never been a deal-breaker, it's cool to see that PS4 has now become the leading platform when it comes to *Call Of Duty*, if for no other reason than Activision's eagerness to jump from Microsoft to Sony confirms the dominance of our favourite console this generation.

What makes things different this time around is that as well as getting *BLOPS III* DLC first, as the 360 did last generation, we'll get something Microsoft never had: a beta. That mean's we will be able to play *Black Ops III* first. Splendid.





△○×□ The whimsical *Playroom VR* is the first demo to feature Morpheus versus DualShock multiplayer, and it works better than we thought it would.



△○×□ Enemies in *Battlezone* threaten to flood your cone of vision, but that's fine, and actually pretty cool when you feel truly swamped in VR.



# PROJECT MORPHEUS

The games that will make VR a reality

Sony's Morpheus has an advantage over the Oculus Rifts and HTC Vives of this world: namely, it's got a pre-established install-base, all the hardware you need to run it already exists, and it'll be cheap. With two full-resolution screens designed specifically for a PS4's output and a comfortable head-strap that actually puts the Oculus design to shame, the Morpheus looks set to take the VR world by storm – simply because of its accessibility and market position

But what use is a bit of hardware without any software to back it up? We've had eyes-on with a few of these demos, and the more we play them, the more we believe in this widely-touted VR future. The first is *Playroom VR* – a multiplayer game where four players (one in a headset, but *all* with DualShock 4s) play a party game-inspired thing: the Morpheus player is a Godzilla-like creature that has to destroy a city, mostly by

headbutting things. The other players have to try and prevent your rampage – you'd be surprised at how good the Morpheus-mapped collision detection is.

There's also *Battlezone* – a game that takes its name and premise from the Eighties arcade tank sim. The Morpheus acts as your scouting device here – you use the DualShock to attack and move, but you look with the Morpheus. It's an intuitive way of looking around a battlefield, we'll give it that: there's never a sense of displacement, never a sense of getting lost. If anything, it allows you to find – and dispatch – enemies a *lot* quicker than you otherwise might.

Then, there's *London Heist* – the Morpheus' answer to high-speed car chases, courtesy of two PlayStation Move controllers. Using the Moves, you have to shoot out the wheels of pursuing vehicles and reload by reaching into a bag and

grabbing a new magazine for your gun. It's the most action-orientated game we've played on the Morpheus, and we're impressed with how well it handles the pace.

Finally, there's *Kitchen* – a VR horror experience designed by Capcom. This is more focussed on immersion than it is action, with an emphasis on sound design and camera trickery. *Kitchen* does some neat stuff with field of vision and making you look twice but otherwise, it doesn't do much you haven't seen in games like *Amnesia*.

Morpheus is positioning itself as a console player's centrepiece – an excuse for those entrenched in the console wars to get to grips with VR, something that's been traditionally the domain of the PC. We're excited to see what other demos come out of Sony, because what we've seen so far proves it's thinking about the vast array of games that can be made *better* with VR.



# MIRROR'S EDGE A CONCEPT REALISED?

Faith's first adventure didn't live up to its potential, but is DICE set to correct that eight years later?



When I first played the original *Mirror's Edge*, I'd never seen anything like it. Running through that stark, minimalist cityscape, vaulting and rolling over obstacles, scrambling up walls and leaping huge gaps from

a first-person perspective was a unique and thrilling experience, but it wasn't a perfect one. I'm someone that's easily bored by developers churning out sequel after sequel, but this is a game that felt like it justified one. It was incredibly experimental for a big-budget game and it was natural that there would be missteps – missteps that could be ironed out in a sequel that could end up being something very special. But that sequel didn't arrive and seven years later, I've *still* not played anything quite like *Mirror's Edge*. Whether that's because developers were put off from making a game like that by its poor commercial performance or whether it's because the game was too far ahead of its time (is the fact that *Call Of Duty* is only *now* making a fuss about adding mechanics like wall-running, seven years after *Mirror's Edge* already did it, not an indication that there's an element of truth to that?) doesn't really matter anymore. Yes, *Mirror's Edge* is back with its reboot, *Catalyst*, set to release on PS4 on 23 February next year.

Undoubtedly the biggest change being made with *Catalyst* is that the game is going open world. My initial response to that was somewhat negative – I liked the way that the first game asked you to treat your environment as a puzzle that you had to solve quickly as you sped through it. When you think



about it, it really does make sense. *Mirror's Edge* was a game that was at its best when in motion; misreading the environment and running into a dead end killed what made the game enjoyable and going open-world should address that, removing barriers to your movement in a way that's perfectly logical for a game focused on parkour.

Let's not underestimate the challenge of designing a huge city that lets you run through it without limitations, however. The game somehow has to free you up to go wherever you want *without* losing the sense that you are constantly making important, split-second decisions about how to navigate the beautifully realised city of Glass – after all, if you can literally go anywhere, what difference does it make which way you decide to go? An ideal situation in my

“SEVEN YEARS  
LATER AND I  
STILL HAVE NOT  
PLAYED ANYTHING  
QUITE LIKE  
MIRROR'S EDGE”

mind would be if the city was strung together with a series of interconnected, splitting routes. That way, you could still make a mistake and realise that the route you've taken isn't going to get you where you thought, but, instead of being stopped dead like in the first game, you're forced to rethink and come up with a plan B whilst on the move. That means you'd keep the sense of flow that makes *Mirror's Edge* brilliant *without* losing the challenge of navigating an environment at speed or feeling as if the choices that you made while doing that were irrelevant.

Perhaps the best news about the new *Mirror's Edge*, however, is that you won't be wielding a gun. Gun combat in the original game was truly, truly awful – not just because it was bad in and of itself (though it most certainly was), but because it got in the way of what made *Mirror's Edge* fun. It became such a prominent feature of the game in its latter







stages that I actually had to tap out. I didn't want to shoot bad guys – I wanted to avoid them, or at least to use Faith's athleticism to overcome them, rather than rubbish gunplay.

It appears that is precisely what DICE is planning to allow us to do in *Catalyst*, because Faith will exclusively use martial arts to take out her enemies this time around. Crucially, DICE has talked about integrating combat into the general flow of the game, the idea being that it doesn't break the way that you move through the environment but is integrated as a part of that process. That's precisely what I wanted to hear because, as I've said before, *Mirror's Edge* relies on momentum to shine. If combat can be made to feel like a part of the game's movement system,

rather than an entirely separate component, that can only be a good thing.

It would be unfair to label the first *Mirror's Edge* a 'proof of concept', but that nevertheless gets to the heart of what makes *Catalyst* such an appealing prospect. There was a vast amount of potential in the original that wasn't realised and regardless of what the reason for that was, it sounds like DICE now understands what it got right and what it got wrong in that game. My hope is that the developer will take that into account for *Catalyst*, and that we will finally get to play the game that *Mirror's Edge* gestured towards being way back in 2008...



# INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation



**FINALLY, THE NEXT** game from the man behind the critically acclaimed *Braid*, Jonathan Blow, looks like it's coming close to release. We've been excited to play **THE WITNESS** ever since it was revealed for PS4 all the way back in 2013 and with the team saying that it has "all the content locked down" and is now reviewing all the game's architectural structures to make sure they're up to scratch, we'll surely get our hands on it by the end of the year. The game is about exploring a beautifully drawn abandoned island, discovering and solving puzzles as you go. You'll be free to roam the island as you please, which should be a good way of avoiding frustration – if you don't understand a particular puzzle, you can move on and come back to it later. Blow has previously talked about the game being built around that eureka moment you get in your mind when a puzzle clicks, showing off the way the game almost teaches you a language in the way you learn to solve its puzzles. It's that cerebral, thoughtful approach to game design that draws us to *The Witness*

△×□ There's a wonderful use of colour in *The Witness*, creating some stunning sights.



and makes us want to see what that mysterious island has to offer. If it's anything like *Braid*, solving the mystery of that island is going to be tricky, but incredibly rewarding.

A game that looks like it will be rewarding in an entirely different way is **RIVE**, appropriately described by its developers as a 'shmupstravaganza'. As you can probably guess, this game is inspired by classic 2D shmups, though it does have a bit of twin-stick shooting and platforming thrown into the mix. The game moves at breakneck pace, filling the screen with enemies and obstacles to challenge your reaction speed and deftness of execution. When a game makes those kind of demands, it *has* to have tight controls if it's going to work. Get that right and

there's every indication that this will be an invigorating and exciting shooter. It's worth mentioning that, as well as being a shooter, the game's got a cool hacking mechanic. By hacking the mechanical enemies you're going up against, you can have them back you up with additional firepower, or even exploit their power of flight to take you to the skies.

Speaking of flying high, there's been some interesting stuff coming out of Team 17's indie publishing division of late and **SHELTERED** is another example of that. It's a survival game set in a barren post-apocalyptic landscape in which you take control of a family who are trying to get by into an underground bunker (when you start the game, you choose the composition of the family and each member's particular skill





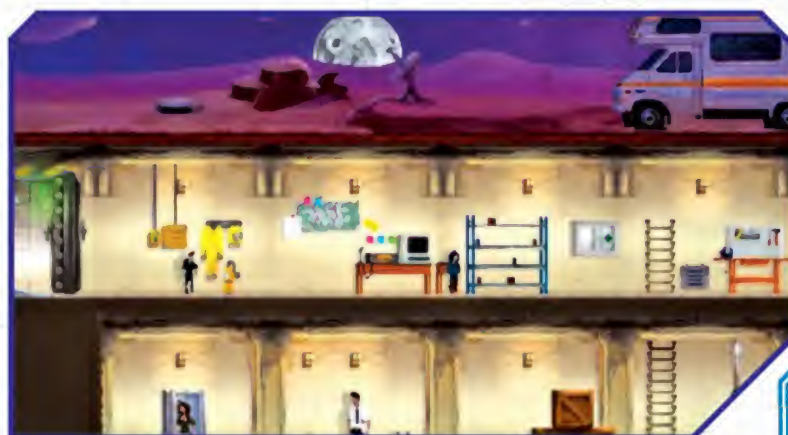


and traits). In trying to take care of the physical and mental wellbeing of each family member, you will find yourself scavenging for supplies in the dangerous irradiated wasteland outside, dealing with encounters with other survivors and making careful decisions about how to use your resources. Getting the balance right will be key – creating tension by keeping us on the edge of failure without making us feel that the odds are insurmountable is vital for survival games. We're intrigued to see if *Sheltered* gets that balance right.

If you fancy something a little less bleak, then you'll find a polar opposite in the Double Fine-published **GNOG**. This bright and colourful puzzle game is based around flipping between the two sides of monsters' heads, interacting with both and seeing how each effects the other. That's about as far as the developers have gone in talking about the game's mechanics, so we don't really have a handle on the nuts and bolts of



△OX□ It looks like all you need to guarantee your safety in this post-apocalyptic world is a good old 2x4...



“RIVE IS APPROPRIATELY DESCRIBED BY ITS DEVELOPERS, TWO TRIBES, AS A ‘SHMUPSTRAVAGANZA’”



△OX□ Gnog looks set to be one of the first VR games to hit PS4 when Project Morpheus releases in 2016.

how the game will play at this stage, but it looks so lovely that we're definitely eager to find out more. It's also worth mentioning that the game will support Project Morpheus as well, which looks like it could be a good fit. When we spoke to nDreams' Patrick O'Luanaigh in issue 258 about VR, he told us that, alongside the obvious benefit of using VR for first-person games, 'diorama'-style games are another genre that works well with the technology. *Gnog* perfectly fits that description, so let's hope that it proves O'Luanaigh's point when we finally get to plonk a Morpheus headset atop our noggin and jump into virtual realities next year. Oh, and O'Luanaigh said that the best VR he's seen so far has been indie, so don't be surprised if it's smaller projects that lead the way when it comes to Project Morpheus. We're here singing the praises of indie development every month, so we certainly won't be!

## FUNDED WE HAPPY FEW

PLATFORMS: PS4  
ETA: SUMMER 2016



Strictly speaking, the *We Happy Few* Kickstarter is for a PC version, but developer Compulsion has said that it intends to bring the game to console after the PC version is done. The game is set in a retro-futuristic version of 1964 England and sees you trying to escape from an oppressively 'happy' town of citizens who all take a drug called 'Joy' to repress memories about the dark history of their town of Wellington Wells.

## WISHLIST SUNSET



If we've any hope of getting *Sunset* on PS4, it's going to depend on how successful the game is on PC, so we have got our fingers crossed on that front. You play as a housekeeper who cleans the home of her employer every day, an hour before sunset. Don't worry; this isn't a cleaning simulator. In rifling through your employer's stuff (you nosy parker), you are drawn into a plot to take down a dictator, influenced by the choices you make in the game.

## IF YOU LOVE... RAYMAN ORIGINS



If you're a sucker for 2D platformers, then we heartily recommend you check out *Shovel Knight* on PS4, PS3 or Vita.



ETA 10 NOVEMBER 2015

PUB BETHESDA

DEV IN-HOUSE

TWITTER @BETHESDASTUDIOS

# Fallout 4

War. War never changes...



**AFTER ALL THE** rumours and hoaxes, all the speculation and anticipation, finally, Bethesda has unveiled one of the most anticipated sequels of all time: *Fallout 4*. It gets a round of applause from us for the way it has decided to conduct that reveal, too. We're not a fan of this trend to announce games years before they're ready and then gradually drip-feed little snippets of information up until release, to the point that by the time the game actually comes out, you feel like you've already seen half of it. With *Fallout 4*, Bethesda has taken a different approach, showing off the game only five months before its 10 November release date. That means we can actually afford to get excited about a game that

should still retain plenty of its mystery when we get to play it in the not-too-distant future.

That's not to say that we don't know anything about *Fallout 4*. For starters, we know that the game is set in the Boston area, with pieces of architecture like the Massachusetts State House, the Bunker Hill Memorial and Fenway Park stadium all appearing in the game. For those of you who know your *Fallout* lore, that means we will be visiting the Commonwealth, the region in which the Institute is located. That is to say, the organisation that was formally MIT and that developed into a secretive group with advanced technology in *Fallout*'s post-apocalyptic universe. No doubt there will be some sort of conflict surrounding the Institute that sets up the story.

In terms of the areas that surrounds the Institute, we've seen glimpses of a pre-war Boston that looks like it's been pieced together using Americana from the mind of a Fifties suburbanite, alongside the dilapidated *Fallout* world that we know. We will actually get to play in that pre-war period in the game's intro, before retreating into the safety of Vault 111 and then emerging into the Commonwealth 200 years later. How our character has survived that long without any ageing isn't yet clear, but we will say that cryogenics has appeared in the *Fallout* universe before and will likely appear again.

What is clear is that *Fallout 4* is making a change by giving our protagonist a voice. *Fallout* has a strong tradition of letting us define who our







△×□ In the world of *Fallout*, the USS Constitution has rockets attached, because future.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ You get a canine companion to accompany on your journey.
- We get to visit a new area that we've only heard stories about in the previous games.
- × You can take to the skies and rain down fire from above in airborne vehicles.
- It will be current-gen only, meaning it won't be held back by last-gen consoles.



△×□ Why is that mutant so happy? The end of the world is no laughing matter.

## "IT'S BEEN PIECED TOGETHER USING AMERICANA FROM THE MIND OF A FIFTIES SUBURBANITE"

character is and deciding how they approach each situation and there's a concern that the fact that the protagonist now has a voice indicates that Bethesda is moving to create a more strongly defined character that we will have less agency over. However, we know that we will be able to play as a man or a woman and Bethesda has also said that as well as picking dialogue options during conversations, you can just walk off while another character is talking to you, or shoot them in the face mid-sentence. That suggests that Bethesda is aware of how crucial choice is to the core appeal of *Fallout* and the developer won't restrict us either in terms of who our character is or how they react to each situation.

One thing we will say about our protagonist is that they don't look particularly great, either in terms of the character models or animation. Do we care about that? Not at all, the reason

being that it's the scope of the world and what we can do within it that makes the *Fallout* games so appealing and it is that for which we want to see the PS4's power leveraged. The world itself is packed with detail and has a vastly improved lighting system in comparison to the previous entries in the series. Whether looking at its barren wildernesses, neon-lit city streets, or rusted shantytowns, that's when the game starts to look great. If the visual superiority of the environment is indicative of where Bethesda's focus lies, then that's not a problem, because a well-crafted world that makes you want to explore is precisely what we want from a new *Fallout* game.

Paul Walker-Emig

**FALLOUT 4** is locked in the Vault with Bethesda Game Studios. Check the website once the radiation has settled for more details: [fallout4.com](http://fallout4.com)





ETA 1 SEPTEMBER

PUB KONAMI

DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

TWITTER @METALGEAR\_EN

# Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

"Get out of my mind, Liquid!"

ALSO COMING  
TO PS3

**PEOPLE OFTEN SAY** that all good things must come to an end, and they're categorically correct. Nothing lasts forever, not even relationships between developers and publishers that you never thought would deteriorate considering the success that they've enjoyed together. Deterioration is precisely what has happened in the case of Konami and Hideo Kojima's relationship, though, leaving *Metal Gear Solid* in an uncertain place in the run up to *The Phantom Pain*. The only thing that seems certain – worryingly so this time, considering the fact that he's been saying it for years – is that this will be Kojima's last *Metal Gear*; as director at least.

At E3, Konami premiered what is purportedly Kojima's last ever *Metal Gear* trailer, and rather than debunking any myths about the overall plot of the game, it has managed to raise *more* questions. The main theme is linguistics, with a variety of characters explaining during the trailer what that means to them. It discusses how each and every

character's life has been irrevocably altered by war and the disparate languages, whether political or military, that have accompanied the violence.

It's unclear how this will influence the story of *The Phantom Pain*, but it alludes strongly to The Boss and ultimately Major Zero's plans for humanity – that a person such as Big Boss would be elevated to being a figurehead (and proxy for The Patriots) while Zero unites the world by controlling the flow of information. Language, the trailer claims, is the best way to control humanity, yet later on, as you'll know if you've played *MGS2* and *MGS4*, it's not true linguistics that are used to manipulate but the encoded, digital language of AI.

Vengeance will be a crucial theme in *MGS V* if any of the trailers from the last two years are to be believed, and we reckon it's highly likely that we'll see Big Boss's downfall at long last. We've seen our man hanging out with Skull Face on several occasions, despite the fact that *Ground Zeroes* depicted old Skeletor as a villain. No, he's potentially another person that has defied Major

Zero and gone off on his own. They appear to be in possession of a Metal Gear, which is the perfect foreshadowing for the original MSX game, when Solid Snake was sent in to disable the machine.

Speculation aside, though, Konami also showed a little more actual gameplay that revealed a few more key things about how it all works and flows. Starting off with Snake on board his mobile command centre (read: big helicopter), the demo revealed some rather deep levels of customisation in the game, ranging from altering attachments, paint jobs and barrels of different weapons, to choosing different camo for Snake and his companions to wear. It's best compared to *Guns Of The Patriots*, in which you could attach all manner of goodies to your weapons.

What we got was a minute look into what appears to be an enormous game. In the gameplay footage, Snake infiltrates an enemy camp utilising a jeep chosen before the mission and tackles one of the side missions that we assume will be available throughout the game. If so, it means that





"WE RECKON IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY THAT WE'LL SEE BIG BOSS' DOWNFALL AT LONG LAST"

## LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES



The big question that we have all been asking...

Think back to E3 2013 and *that* trailer. A mysterious boy named Eli sits staring into middle distance. He has familiar long blonde hair and, inexplicably, a snake. Ever the king of subtlety, Kojima may as well have made the young lad shout "HELLO SNAKE!" from the cockpit of a Hind D – it was obviously a young Liquid. Finally we've seen some open acknowledgement of the fact in the 2015 trailer – Major Zero's failsafe against Big Boss coming to fruition.

But who is the other lad? Up until now it was assumed that Liquid Snake and Solid Snake were separated after EVA gave birth to them, the former forging a career in the British SAS before going a bit nuts and the latter making his way as a US Green Beret before developing a strange voice and taking on Big Boss, yet at the climax of the E3 trailer two Elis sit together as Big Boss name-checks Zero's scheme. The big question is this – is Solid Snake in *The Phantom Pain*? If he is, there are only two ways to make it work: retcon or nanomachines, son. We wouldn't put either past Hideo Kojima.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ With its gigantic world, it is the most ambitious *MGS* to date.
- It will potentially tell the story of how Big Boss becomes the villain we know him as.
- ✕ *MGSV* is guaranteed to have a lot of secrets in store, in classic Kojima style.
- It may be the last chance to see Kojima's unique and eccentric directorial style.

you'll be free to enjoy the main story at your leisure, taking a bit of time out to go and Fulton a KGB goat or whatever. It also hints at replayability that we haven't seen outside of *Peace Walker*, which had millions of missions to augment the game.

It's impossible to not ruminate on what the story will hold – as usual, Kojima is bound to have done what you least expect, making the whole thing even more exciting. But even without considering the inevitable narrative twists and turns, *MGS V* is looking genuinely exceptional. The world alone will prove to be a game changer for the franchise, complemented by gameplay that was honed to such a degree in *Ground Zeroes* that we'd go as far as to call it best in class. Slap a load of trademark *MGS* silliness on top of a great core game and all signs point to this being game of the year material.

Steve Holmes

**METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN** is becoming more confusing by the day at Kojima Productions. For more intel, check out [konami.com](http://konami.com)

[www.play-mag.co.uk](http://www.play-mag.co.uk)



△○×□ Here, Snake has fitted D.D. with a black combat suit. Surely poor D.D. is going to be a little hot wearing that in the middle of Afghanistan?

SZ-336 SMG HS  
+5  
PLAY 25  
SUP 31/239





ETA 23 OCTOBER

PUB UBISOFT

DEV IN-HOUSE

TWITTER @ASSASSINSCREED

# Assassin's Creed Syndicate

London calling



**YOU'D THINK WE'D** be excited about an *Assassin's Creed* game set in the UK, but we're not, and let us tell you why. As much as Ubisoft might

try and convince us that each *Assassin's Creed* game is doing something new, with *Syndicate* being no exception, it's becoming increasingly difficult to see those changes as anything but tweaks designed to distract us from the fact that we are playing the same game year after year.

The fact is, as much as *Assassin's Creed* might try and improve things – take *Unity*'s mini-sandbox stealth missions as an example – it feels like it is always being held back by its core, a core that is tired and strained after being rolled out to perform for the public year after year. You might argue that *Black Flag* was an exception, but even there, it was clear that what had the potential to be a classic pirate game was held back by the fact that it had to try and be an *Assassin's Creed* game. So sure, *Syndicate* might end up looking fantastic and we'd imagine we'll get some pleasure from exploring London, just as we did *Unity*'s Paris, but we can't

muster much enthusiasm for what *Syndicate* is going to offer from a gameplay perspective.

So, just what is *Syndicate* bringing that can be said to be new? There's the rope launcher, for one, which lets you to perform a passable Batman impression as you rocket directly to the top of buildings in a similar fashion to the caped crusader with his grappling hook. Does that fundamentally change the game in an interesting way? Not really. In fact, when you think about it, allowing you to skip the climbing bits in *Assassin's Creed* seems like an acknowledgment that what is meant to be one of the key strains of AC isn't actually that much fun, which should set alarm bells ringing.

The introduction of character switching and, along with it, the first playable female character in a mainline *Assassin's Creed* game is a nice addition, and it's certainly preferable to Ubisoft's rather offensive suggestion that making female characters was too much effort when asked about that possibility with *Unity*. It's also pleasing to see that sibling stars Jacob and Evie appear more charismatic and interesting at first glance

than some of the series' duller protagonists. But, again, does any of that change the fundamental experience of playing *Assassin's Creed*? No. We're not suggesting we're not happy about having two characters to play as – we're simply pointing out that our main problem with *Assassin's Creed* over the years has been the fact that the core mechanics just don't excite us like they did back in AC's early days. If *Syndicate* doesn't address that, then anything else it does is relatively unimportant.

Our cynicism about what *Syndicate* can offer extends to the story. The game is based around taking over London from the bottom up, with the game drawing on the exploitation of the working classes during the industrial revolution to tell its tale. Don't get us wrong, there's potential to do something really intriguing there. But let's not forget that opportunity was also there with *Unity*, set as it was during the French Revolution. That opportunity was squandered, with the game pretty much ignoring one of the most significant events in modern history in favour of focusing on the story of its aristocratic protagonist.



## YOO WOT, GUV'NOR?

We've already heard some questionable Cockney in *Syndicate*, continuing the fine tradition of terrible accents in videogames



### ASSASSIN'S CREED ROGUE

Shay doesn't do the best job with his Irish accent, but there's also a ship captain with a terrible Scottish accent.



### HEAVY RAIN

There are some awful American accents in *Heavy Rain*, but the worst are those from the French child actors.



### HYDROPHOBIA

What the hell is that noise coming over your comms? Oh, it's someone's failed attempt at a Scottish accent.



### CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Who would have guessed that the man that played Alex Mason is Australian? Well, quite a lot of people, actually...



△×□ No doubt there will be an array of industrial revolution-tinged tech for you to bust out alongside the classic hidden blades.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



We will get to see Victorian London replicated in incredible detail.



Our protagonist Jacob apparently has a endless supply of incognito top hats.



You can brawl with enemies on the top of moving horse-drawn carriages.



There are hints that your base of operations is inside the Big Ben clock tower.

In regards to the concept of taking over London, it can't have escaped long time *Assassin's Creed* players among you that the idea of gaining control of districts by taking out gang leaders isn't exactly new to the series. On the contrary, it's appeared in multiple entries beforehand.

Perhaps we're being a little harsh on *Syndicate*. There is still time for Ubisoft to tell us more about how it's going to revitalise the series. But until it does that, it can waffle on about characters or whatever and we won't care. We've been burned by *Assassin's Creed* promises too many times to believe that things are going to change. What we'd really like to see is the series being completely revolutionised. It's clear we're not going to get that, so a new mechanic that will freshen things up, akin to the ship combat in *Black Flag*, would help sway us. As it stands, we've seen nothing of the sort.

Paul Walker-Emig

**ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE** is being developed in the industrial hothouse at Ubisoft Quebec. Check the website for more details: [assassinscreed.ubi.com](http://assassinscreed.ubi.com)

"WHAT WE'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE IS THE SERIES BEING COMPLETELY REVOLUTIONISED"



△×□ Jacob's far too well-spoken for a man that's so geez in every other respect.



ETA 17 SEPTEMBER

PUB KONAMI

DEV IN-HOUSE

TWITTER @OFFICIALPES

# PES 2016

Can Konami outfox EA again?



**THINK OF PES** as Juventus. A giant of the footballing world, widely regarded as one of the best teams to grace the planet. A team with a trophy cabinet bursting with domestic and European honours. Yet, that team would find itself shamed, mired in scandal as it was relegated to the second tier of Italian football. Over the years, they fought their way back to the top of the Italian game and this year made it all the way to the Champions League final. *PES* has taken a similar path. Once, it was the best. Then it too became mired in scandal (by which we mean it became scandalously bad) and was branded B-tier as a result, before clawing its way back to the top. There's one way in which *PES* has bested Juve, however. If its battle with *FIFA* is *PES*'s Champions League final, *PES* lifted the trophy last year. That *PES* is back on top makes us excited for *PES 2016*.

The question is whether *PES* can retain the title of Best Football Videogame by making the

that stuff off is sure to be satisfying, but in truth, that kind of spectacle is a treat in *PES* rather than the main course. The best thing about *PES* is the variety it offers in the way you approach matches, the way that it makes every passage of play and every goal feels unique. If what Konami says is true, that aspect of the game should only be improved by the adjustments it is making to player AI. It says that your teammates will be far more proficient at exploiting space, meaning *PES 2016* should be less reliant on the trusty one-two. We love using combination play to create and run into space, so that sounds brilliant to us. Let us again issue a cautionary note: the assertion that players will make better runs and will have better awareness of what's around them also falls into that category of 'things that Konami and EA say every year'.

What definitely is new is *PES 2016*'s dynamic camera, which will adjust itself automatically depending on what's happening on the pitch. We can't decide if that's brilliant, or a disaster. We like

the idea of a camera that zooms out while we're in midfield, allowing us to get an overview of where our players are and what

## "WE CAN'T DECIDE IF IT'S BRILLIANT, OR A DISASTER"

right tweaks to ensure the series continues its steady upwards trajectory. Part of the problem in determining whether it will is that Konami is saying the same things that EA does when talking about *FIFA* every year. So, there's talk of improvements to one-on-ones, a wider range of movements, upgraded feints and faster response times all added to the arsenal to make flummoxing defenders easier. As a counterbalance to that, Konami says that timing tackles perfectly will see defenders shove opponents off the ball to instantly secure it and place you in prime position to counterattack. But, again, these are the type of things that gets said about *PES* and *FIFA* every year, so it might be best to treat it as meaningless jibber-jabber until we actually get to play the game.

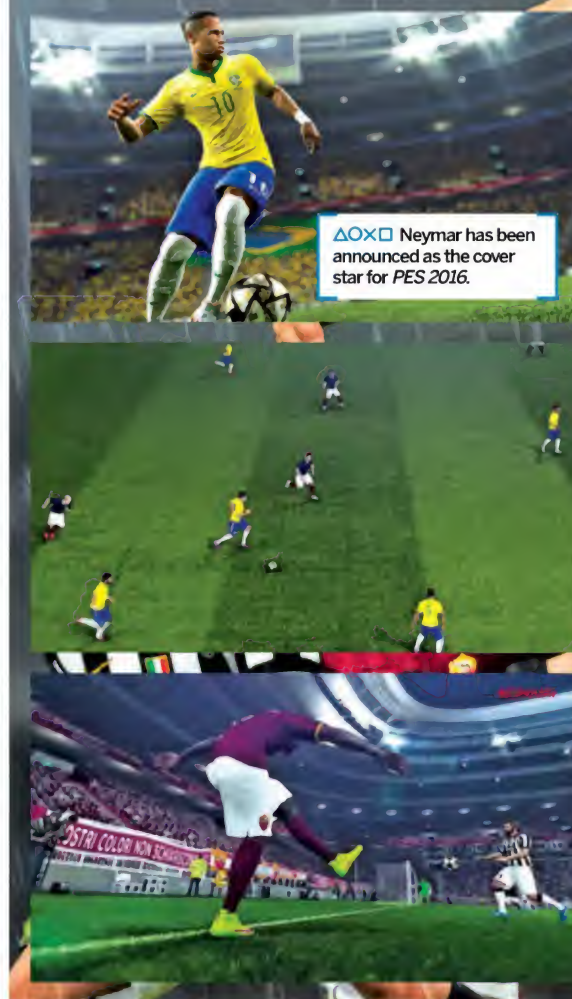
In the *PES* gameplay we've seen, some of the new movements Konami has been talking about, along with fancy ball control and spectacular aerial acrobatics, have been on show. Pulling any of

runs they are making, and that zooms in as we move into the box to give us a better perspective from which to pull off intricate dribbles. Will it work that well in practice, though? We're sceptical, but then we can always turn it off if it doesn't work.

We know that *PES* has got itself a brilliant base after successfully moving to the *FOX Engine* last year with *PES 2015* and delivering the best *Pro Evo* game in years. That means we're optimistic about *PES 2016*. Give us a graphically enhanced sequel with a few improvements to the core gameplay, a Master League UI that isn't terrible and an improved MyClub and we'll be singing the name of the returning champion of football videogames once again. To the Konami Stadium!

**Paul Walker-Emig**

**PES 2016** is preparing for the new season under the coaches at Konami. Check the website for more details: [pes.konami.com](http://pes.konami.com)



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## HIPSTER'S CHOICE

Show off the goal that makes the chin-strokers happy

There are a few thunderbastards and solo goals in the *PES* gameplay that we've seen, but our favourites are the ones that show off that football is a team sport. What we want to see is a connoisseur's goal – a goal that involves intricate passing and movement. A couple of tricks and flicks are okay, so long as they are part of a team effort.





△×□ Ah, defending. Our biggest PES weakness...

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



A new weather system means that weather can change during the match.



The Master League has received a much-needed overhaul in PES 2016.



You can juggle the ball with fancy flicks and then twat it into the top corner of the net.



There's a new commentator on board, replacing the awful one from last year.



△×□ We really like the way iconic players move like their real life counterparts in PES 2015. Naturally, that'll also be a feature of PES 2016.



# ANATOMY OF... DARTH VADER

The juggernaut that is Star Wars is back and leading the way on PS4 is DICE's multiplayer shooter, *Battlefront*, bringing blasters, AT-ATs and a man that we think you might just be familiar with...

## FEEL THE FORCE

While you'll spend the majority of *Star Wars Battlefront* using blasters, you will get to bust out Force powers and a lightsaber now and again as you take control of an iconic *Star Wars* hero character. Naturally, these characters will be far more powerful than your average Stormtrooper or Rebel soldier.

## TOW NO YOU DIDN'T

One of the cool things about *Battlefront* for fans is how it brings back memories of *Star Wars*. The score, the sounds, the vehicles, the characters – it's a veritable explosion of nostalgia. Then there are the iconic moments, like the battle on Hoth. Here, you can take down AT-ATs by tying up their legs with a tow cable, just like in the movie.

## BATTLE BEYOND

Rather than simply telling you whether you're winning and losing, DICE is trying to represent the changing tides of battle with what's happening in the environment. You might see a Star Destroyer crashing down to the earth in the background to represent the fact that you're winning. It's a small touch, but a nice way of telling you how the fight is going in a natural way.

## REBEL ALLIANCE

EA has revealed that *Battlefront* will also have a co-op survival mode. It seems to follow a pretty standard template, where you are confronted by increasingly difficult waves of enemies that you have to push back. Let's be honest, it's the competitive multiplayer that we're going to spend the most time playing, but it's cool to see some other modes too.

ETA 20 NOVEMBER | PUB EA | DEV DICE | TWITTER @EA\_DICE

# Star Wars Battlefront





From the makers of **PLAY** 

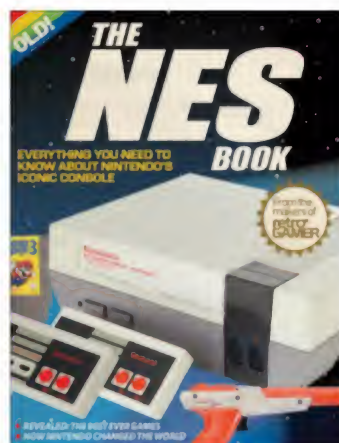
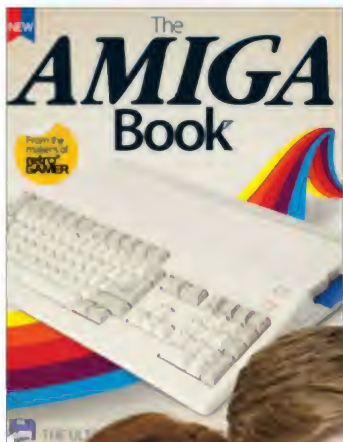


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## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



This re-imagining of the original game sees the return of some well-loved characters.



If you find yourself falling in love with *Ratchet & Clank*, there'll be a movie for you to enjoy.



The game's enemies are full of character, courtesy of some brilliant animation.



We're starving for great 3D platformers on the PS4 and *Ratchet & Clank* can fix that.

"YOU CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT YOU'RE BEING LET LOOSE INSIDE A LAVISH CARTOON"



△○×□ There's an insane level of detail that's gone into *Ratchet & Clank*'s world.





ETA Q1 2016

PUB SONY

DEV INSOMNIAC GAMES

TWITTER @INSOMNIACGAMES

# Ratchet & Clank

The game based on the movie based on the game



**THE THING THAT** strikes you immediately about Insomniac's *Ratchet & Clank* reboot is just how unabashedly colourful and joyous it is. It has a real liveliness about it that makes it instantly likable and makes you want to jump in and play. From an aesthetic and conceptual perspective, that's because (from what we've seen so far) a great deal of attention has been paid to pretty much every element of the game. From the fantastic animation of its enemies, to its intricately detailed backdrops, to the playfulness and spectacle of its weaponry, everything hits a high bar of quality, but, crucially, it is also being done in service of making the game feel *fun*.

It's tempting to say that the game's got something of that Pixar or Dreamworks magic about it. That might be going a little bit too far, particularly at this early stage, but there are unquestionably flourishes here and there that bring those kinds of movies to mind. It may be that *Ratchet & Clank* eventually reveals itself as nothing but a poor imitator of those famous studios, but to look at the game in its early stages, you can't help but think that you are being let loose inside a lavish and colourful cartoon. There's something appealing about that, particularly when it feels like

almost every game that comes along these days is dark, bleak and 'gritty'.

You might say that *Ratchet & Clank* is offering us something that's becoming increasingly rare, then, and you'd be right. We're not just talking about its happy, colourful and boisterous nature either – we're talking about good ol' fashioned 3D platformers. Long gone is the golden age of the 3D platformer, where the likes of *Crash* and *Banjo* reigned supreme. The closest thing we have got on PS4 is a game that stars a character who might as well be composed of the rotting, discarded off-cuts of those titles that he fails so badly to emulate, *Knack*. In other words, there's a nice spot to be claimed and our hope is that *Ratchet & Clank* is going to make it its own.

Whether it will actually do that will depend on the way it plays. Without getting our hands on it, the best we can say about it is that it at least *looks* slick. That applies to both platforming and combat. When it comes to the former, there'll be a variety of gadgets to use, such as a beam that lets you swing from anchor points between platforms and some copter blades that sprout from Clank's head to slow your descent when falling.

In combat, variety comes in the form of the many weapons you'll have to switch between. This

includes the like of the Pixelizer, which turns your foes into blocky, low-res versions of themselves and the Groovitron, which sets off a tune that will distract your enemies, transforming the battleground into a techno dance floor. The series has traditionally had a large roster of outlandish and inventive weaponry, so it's cool to see that aspect return. What we haven't yet seen, however, is whether those weapons are distinct enough in their uses to require you to switch between them to deal with different situations and enemies. Having a large selection of weapons is great and all, but if they don't feel distinct enough in how you use them to require you to change up your approach depending on the challenge you are being confronted with, then we can't help but think that will be a missed opportunity.

There are still some unanswered questions about *Ratchet & Clank*, then, but for now, we're pretty positive about it. The game looks incredibly pretty and gives the impression that it'll be a lot of fun to play. That's a pretty good start...

**Paul Walker-Emig**

**RATCHET & CLANK** is being built by that sleepy lot over at Insomniac Games. Check the website for more details: [insomniacgames.com/games/ratchet-clank](http://insomniacgames.com/games/ratchet-clank)

△×□ You've got to battle your way to the front of this train, presumably to stop that big glowy thing exploding and blowing something up.





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# Kingdom Hearts III

## When will our lives begin?



**SO TANGLED IS** confirmed for *Kingdom Hearts III*, which is great news as Disney's adaptation of Rapunzel is one of the studio's best efforts in recent years. It's also great news for another reason – series veterans will likely share our fatigue from retreading the same ground over and over in every game and if we never see Wonderland or Agrabah in *Kingdom Hearts* again, it'll still be too soon. New worlds are always met with excitement, since seeing how the team manages to theme up enemy designs and gameplay experiences in line with the subject matter for the first time is a delight. Fans are going nuts with all kinds of additional predictions for new worlds, especially since Disney's ownership of both Marvel and *Star Wars* means there's potential for some legendary crossover action – anyone for a lightsaber Keyblade, superpowered Mickey Mouse or seeing Cloud fighting alongside Iron Man? Yeah, that's *money* right there.

And that's barely the start. The chances of seeing a *Frozen* world are so high that you'd get worse odds on EA releasing a new football game next year, and that alone would probably blast *KHIII* to sales figures that destroy all of its predecessors and indeed most other games. Get the world in there, get a character on the box (just not that derpy snowman thing, thanks) and get the game out in time for the sequel's release then

all you need to do is heavily feature *Frozen* stuff in marketing material and watch the profits explode. It's all so common sense that the only tricky part there will be actually finishing the game – it's already been in development for quite some time and with Square spinning so many plates at the moment, working to a relatively strict deadline could be tough. Luckily, people are predicting *Frozen 2* won't hit until 2018, so Square still has plenty of time to make *KHIII* awesome. It's not just Disney crossovers we're interested to see, either. With *Final Fantasy XIV* flying high and *XV* coming soon, recurring MMO NPCs and the boyband have to be shoo-ins, right? We'd be amazed if Lightning doesn't turn up at some point, too.

The game looks stunning on PS4, and Sora's new theme park-based attacks are especially cool – bashing into enemies during an impromptu teacup ride and bashing into bosses in the Big Thunder Mountain train break away from specific franchises to celebrate Disney as a whole, and it's glorious. It's annoying that we're so excited to play it, because it's probably still a few years out. To anyone still clinging to hope of a 2015 release, we've got three words for you: let it go.

**Luke Albigés**

**KINGDOM HEARTS III** is locked in a tower, but you can head here to ask it to let down its hair: [www.kingdomhearts.com/khiii/](http://www.kingdomhearts.com/khiii/)





"FANS ARE GOING NUTS WITH ALL KINDS OF ADDITIONAL PREDICTIONS FOR NEW WORLDS"





PREVIEW

DARK SOULS III

PS4

IN THE  
MEANTIME...

**DARK SOULS** It's famous for its difficulty, but shines for a million other reasons. Undeniably one of the best games of the PS3 generation, if not ever.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



More of the same from one of the very best developers out there. Prepare to die.



Miyazaki is front and centre, directing as well as taking control of level design.



Coming off the back of *Bloodborne*, expect From to bring you some excellent combat.



You've got one of the best world builders in the industry in Miyazaki.

△○×□ Oh look – another fire-breathing dragon. We're looking forward to dying to that.

△○×□ Oh hey, a fearsome armour-clad soldier. We'll look forward to dying to that, too.



△○×□ A destroyed and generally depressing world? Yup, *Dark Souls* is back alright...

ETA Q1 2016

PUB BANDAI NAMCO

DEV FROM SOFTWARE

TWITTER @DARKSOULSGAME

# Dark Souls III

Seasons in the abyss



**THERE WAS A** mountain of great reveals at E3 this year, but one in particular left us tingling with an unsavoury, morbid anticipation.

Praise the sun. Now praise the sun again. After *Bloodborne*, it felt wrong to assume that From Software would hop back on the old bandwagon and go Sunbro again but, thankfully, it has, and we're incredibly excited to find out what horrors await in *Dark Souls III* – the latest chapter in one of the great action-RPG successes of recent years.

Straight off the bat, what's particularly exciting is that *Souls* main man Hidetaka Miyazaki is back in the director's chair. Although *Dark Souls II* was bloody superb, it was developed by a different team while the A-team got stuck into *Bloodborne*, and as a result it lacked a lot of the gloom and the interconnected design that were hallmarks of *Dark Souls* and *Demon's Souls* before it. Judging by what From Software has said so far about *Dark Souls III*, the world will be more like the first *Dark*

one-hand and two-hand weapon wielding, but there is also the ability to drop into a special stance with certain weapons. The Straight Sword, for example, gains a guard break move when in this stance, and even better, the Greatsword special stance includes a shoulder bash/upward slice move that appears to dodge through enemy attacks before delivering a counterstrike. Nice.

Bows have been refreshed, too. Often considered folly by many players – at best a device with which to lure enemies out of tough areas one by one – bows have been changed up to make them a more viable solution in a proper combat situation. The Short Bow now includes a rolling R1 attack and shoots super fast, whereas the Long Bow takes a little longer to draw but does far more damage than it used to.

Another nugget of excellent news is that it looks like Estus Flasks have returned. We didn't mind the use of Lifegems in *Dark Souls II* (and *Demon's Souls*' Moon Grasses) but only having a certain

## “MIYAZAKI HAS PERSONALLY TAKEN CONTROL OF LEVEL DESIGN”

*Souls* – in other words, if you can see it, you can go there – and eyes-on impressions from a closed demo at E3 confirm the inclusion of trademark Miyazaki shortcuts back to bonfires.

In fact, Miyazaki was reputedly involved in the game's development at the same time as he was directing *Bloodborne*, as if that wasn't enough work. He has personally taken control of level design for this instalment as well, so expect slightly fairer enemy placement than in *Dark Souls II* and generally more interesting areas, although the ability to warp between bonfires right from the get-go remains, which will be music to many peoples' ears. We're not entirely sold, as the first *Dark Souls* was so well designed that you didn't feel the need to warp until after Anor Londo, and then you could. Warping is stress-free and we don't like it.

Combat has been overhauled again, most notably with the addition of stances. In the demo, it was apparent that you can still switch between

amount of heals between bonfires is a much better mechanic in our opinion. It's also been confirmed that you can indeed praise the sun to your heart's content – it's an essential feature, after all.

It's all tremendously exciting, really. The demo area that we've seen looks fantastic – a glum and rather oppressive area covered in ash with all sorts of nooks and crannies to explore and a bevy of Undead Burg-esque hollow hordes with strange powers out for your head. At the end of the area, what appears to be an excellent From Software boss fight awaits – a strange being with a flaming sword that sets fire to *everything*, leaving the arena a blazing hellhole by the end of the encounter. We're ready. Question is, are you?

**Steve Holmes**

**DARK SOULS III** is studying weapon scaling and iframes with From Software. For more despair, head to [www.fromsoftware.jp/pc\\_en](http://www.fromsoftware.jp/pc_en)



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## HAWKEYE SOULS

You have my bow

With the addition of faster short bows and the ability to throw a rolling R1 attack or two into the mix, PvP bow fights are an absolute must, if we're honest. There are so many great, stupid *Dark Souls* PvP fights on YouTube – create your own with the help of the Short Bow and your trusty Share button. We reckon the faster bows might supplant casting as the most irritating invasion tactic.



"ANYONE WHO KNOWS THEIR DISHONORED KNOWS THAT DARKNESS WILL LURK UNDERNEATH"



ETA Q1 2016

PUB BETHESDA

DEV ARKANE STUDIOS

TWITTER @ARKANESTUDIOS

# Dishonored 2

"It's always good to see a familiar face..."

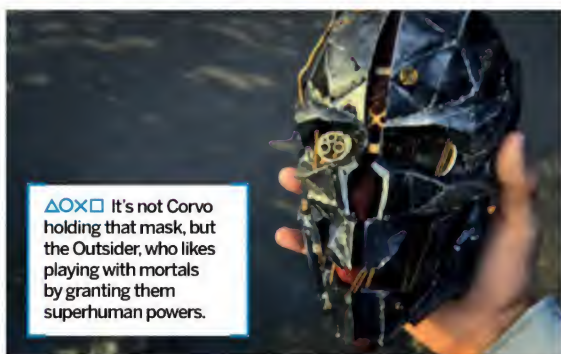


**IF YOU DON'T** already know why a sequel to *Dishonored* is bloody brilliant news, then allow us to enlighten you. Its sandbox levels may be far smaller than other games that use that term to describe themselves, but when it comes to the scope of what you can do within them and the sense of freedom you get from playing with the possibilities they offer, few games can match up. A testament to that fact is that, back before the original *Dishonored* was released, developers at Arkane Studios found that players that were testing the game used the supernatural powers on offer in creative combinations that even *they* hadn't anticipated. You can, for example, freeze time after an enemy has fired at you, possess them, move them into the trajectory of their own bullet, exit their body, restart time and have them killed by their own bullet. Levels might have been relatively enclosed in a literal sense, then, but there was a sense that with a bit of imagination, there were

scores of possibilities at every turn. That's why we're so excited about *Dishonored 2*, a game that we hope can retain a focus on player freedom as well as giving us even more options with new weapons, gadgets and powers.

Speaking of new powers, we've already had a glimpse of one. Before we get to that, though, we've got to mention that this new power is being wielded by Emily Kaldwin, the daughter of the first game's protagonist, Corvo Attano. *Dishonored 2* is set 15 years after *Dishonored*, with Emily now an adult who has had her throne taken from her, now seemingly on a quest to get it back. You can choose to play as either Emily or Corvo, with that choice having an impact on what powers you can wield. We've seen Emily use the time manipulation power that Corvo had in the first game, so it would seem that some will be shared, but Emily also has that aforementioned ability that's new to *Dishonored*.

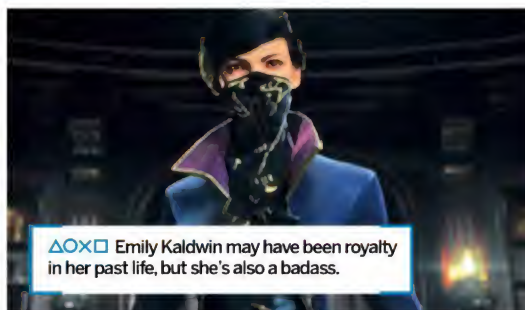
Emily is able to fire out two spectral tentacles that have a couple of different uses. On the one



**△○×□** It's not Corvo holding that mask, but the Outsider, who likes playing with mortals by granting them superhuman powers.







△×□ Emily Kaldwin may have been royalty in her past life, but she's also a badass.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ The Blink mechanic is awesome and we're happy we can teleport once again!
- We get to visit locations that we only have read about in the first game.
- × You're free to go head-to-head with enemies or use stealth.
- You don't necessarily have to kill your targets. The series is extremely open.

hand, they function in a similar way to Corvo's Blink power, allowing you to pull yourself up to high ledges, or break a long fall. However, we've also seen them used in an offensive capacity, one tentacle grabbing an assassination target by the foot before the other finishes him off.

Alongside the new abilities we'll have access to, there are also going to be some new challenges for us to face. *Dishonored*'s steampunk tech seems to have taken a step forward since the first game, with automaton enemies making in appearance, thought we don't yet know precisely how they will test your abilities. There's a new plague, too, with some disgusting flying creatures replacing the rats that ran through the gutters in the first game.

As interested as we are in seeing how these new enemies change the way the game plays, we're also curious to see whether the new location we get to visit in *Dishonored 2*, Karnaca, will represent a departure in terms of the size of the game's levels and how they are structured. We're not necessarily against them getting bigger as that could help support the focus on choice and player creativity that *Dishonored*'s all

about, but we just hope the game's not going to lose its focus if it does go in that direction.

We're not going to know that until we get to see more of Karnaca, capital city of the island of Serkonos. With its warm, temperate climate, it's going to be brighter than Dunwall in a literal sense, but anyone who knows their *Dishonored* knows that darkness will lurk underneath in this world filled with corruption and rampant inequality. Indeed, if it's anything like the first game, finding out about the place and its power dynamics will be fascinating – *Dishonored* used small stories about locations in the world that you could draw out using the Heart that you carried around (yes, you read that right) to imbue the world with a sense of place and give it a political context. We are incredibly excited about jumping into that world once again to see whether it is as a compelling a place to play as it was first time around.

**Paul Walker-Emig**

**DISHONORED 2** is being developed by the mysterious forces at Arkane Studios. Check the website for more details: [www.dishonored.com](http://www.dishonored.com)

## DEFINITIVE DUNWALL

Don't be an Outsider



Did *Dishonored* really need an overhauled current-gen version? No, of course not. But, if you've not played the game, then the definitive edition of *Dishonored* that's going to hit PS4 on 28 August should be an excellent way of fixing that. It will include all the DLC released for the original game, including its excellent story add-ons in which you get to play as the assassin Daud – *The Knife Of Dunwall* and *The Brigmore Witches*.



ETA 6 NOVEMBER | PUB ACTIVISION | DEV TREYARCH | TWITTER @CALLOFDUTY

# Call Of Duty: Black Ops III

Destiny: Mankind Titanfalls



**WE'RE CONSCIOUS THAT** it's going to sound like we're pointing fingers at *Black Ops III* for pinching all its ideas, so let us point out a couple of things before we get started.

Firstly, *Call Of Duty* has been incredibly influential in its own right, with scores of games emulating *COD*'s spectacle-filled campaigns or building their multiplayer modes around frequent XP unlocks, killstreaks, perks and other *Call Of Duty* staples. If *Call Of Duty* feels like borrowing a few ideas, then, it has probably earned that right. The other thing that's worth mentioning is that there's cross-pollination going on in games all the time when it comes to ideas and mechanics. That's not really a bad thing, providing the game that's borrowing the idea also has something fresh to offer.

But will *Black Ops III* be able to do that? Because it's sure as hell borrowing a lot from other series, the influence of the likes of *Titanfall*, *Destiny* and *Deus Ex* writ large across it.

Let us start with the game's movement. Speed has always been an important part of *Call Of Duty* and that remains in *BLOPS III*. The difference here is that the game also aims to capture the fluidity of movement offered by *Titanfall*, making boost jumps and wall-runs a key feature of the way that you traverse the game's maps. We're not against that, because the effortless and spectacular ways that you can tear through the environment as you take out the opposition look exhilarating. But, of course it looks exhilarating, because the *Call Of Duty* gameplay we've seen shows off what the game looks like in the hands of a pro player

– swatting an enemy off the wall before leaping onto it themselves, taking out a couple more while running along it, switching to a crossbow as they boost jump off to let loose a perfect headshot while falling towards the ground. What it doesn't show you is what it would look like in *our* hands, in which case you'd see someone accidentally bouncing a grenade off a low ceiling so that it lands at their feet and blows them to smithereens, thereby giving them a moments respite to wipe the accumulated dribble off their controller. The point we're making is that it's easy to make *Call Of Duty* look fluid and exciting, but that doesn't guarantee it will feel that way when it's in your hands.

Moving on to another of *Black Ops III*'s obvious influences, the campaign now supports four-player co-op, offering us the chance to play together in

## SPECIAL FORCES

In multiplayer, you won't be playing as a faceless grunt anymore, but as named Specialist with their own abilities. Here are just a few of the final roster...



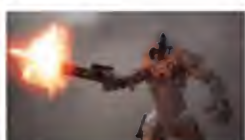
### RUIN

With his bionics, Ruin is good at smashing stuff. Hence, his special ability, Gravity Spikes, which unleashes a high powered slam to the ground from an aerial position.



### SERAPH

With Seraph, you can either equip a Combat Focus ability that gives her a bonus multiplier towards killstreaks, or use the Annihilator, a one-hit kill weapon.



### REAPER

Reaper is a robot, so he doesn't care about your human emotions. He's also got a 'Scythe', or, to call it what it actually is, an arm that transforms into a minigun.





△×□ Bows in the future?  
BLOPS III says yes.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



You can control walking tanks to rain down punishment on your attackers.



We may have seen it before in other games, but parkour is still awesome.



All *Black Ops III* DLC will apparently be coming to PS4 before any other platform.



There's going to be a multiplayer beta ahead of release and, again, PlayStation will get it first.



△×□ War never changes... but it does get more robots down the line somewhere.

## "IT'S SURE AS HELL BORROWING A LOT FROM OTHER SERIES"

a similar way as we might do in *Destiny* – if you still don't think *Call Of Duty* is paying attention to its Bungie stablemate, explain to us why knock-offs of *Destiny's* Fists Of Havoc and Golden Gun supers make an appearance – and we actually think this could invigorate *COD's* campaign. Over the years, those campaigns have been something that we've cared less and less about, so the idea of playing through the story with three other friends has re-piqued our interest. We will have to see if the game will leverage its co-op gameplay in a meaningful way – allocating you different tasks and confronting you with situations that require teamwork, for example – but even if it doesn't, playing with friends is always more fun.

Speaking of fun, the augmented soldier that you control has access to a number of cybernetically enhanced abilities (hello, *Deus Ex*). To bring another comparator to the table, it's a bit like a sci-fi *Dishonored*, with a wheel of powers for you to select from that allow you to take control of

enemy drones, cripple robot enemies, turn on optical camo and so on. It's not entirely clear how these abilities will be limited to stop them being overpowered, but they look like cool tools to be added to the arsenal in any case.

The sense we get from *Black Ops III*, with its strong focus on technology and its liberation of player movement, is that it's pushing in the direction that *Advanced Warfare* started to take the series. That's by no means a bad thing, because *AW* was a great game and it *looks* like it's doing it to spectacular effect. But again, we ask whether that is simply down to the unstoppable *COD* marketing machine, or whether it will still feel that exciting when we finally get our hands on it? We'll find out soon...

Paul Walker-Emig

**CALL OF DUTY** is getting the cybernetic enhancements that'll turn it into *Black Ops III* at Treyarch. Check the website for more details: [callofduty.com](http://callofduty.com)



ETA Q4 2015

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# Transformers: Devastation

Bayonetta in disguise



ALSO COMING  
TO PS3

**E3 MADE** A lot of dreams come true this year. *The Last Guardian* evolved from vapourware into a real thing, *Shenmue* is finally coming back against all odds and even the long-rumoured *FFVII* remake turned up, completing a holy trinity of wonderful surprises. But the wish fulfilment didn't end there – fans with more specific prayers also saw them answered, from those who wanted more *Alpha* characters in *Street Fighter V* to people who were desperate for a *Tangled* world in *Kingdom Hearts III*. The show even managed to deliver things so unlikely and bizarre that we never even knew we wanted them before, and this is one such example. A Platinum action game based on the G1 *Transformers* cartoon, you say? Basically *Bayonetta* with giant robots? Yeah, we're okay with this. We're *all kinds* of okay with this.

Washing away the foul taste left by Michael Bay's Hollywood embarrassments, the return to the colourful look and simple designs of the original TV series is the best thing that has happened to the *Transformers* franchise in years. The authenticity with which Platinum is recreating the source material is simply impeccable – most of the original voice cast will reprise their roles, sound effects come straight from the show, the cel-shaded visuals nail the cartoon look and even animation has been pared back a little from Platinum's usual standards to make characters move more like their TV counterparts. The more you love the glory days of *Transformers*, the more you'll get out of

*Devastation*, basically – little nods to things like Prime's magic trailer (which he can apparently conjure and dispel at will) and using less successful toys as the basis for grunt enemies will delight the hardcore, but the tight combat Platinum is so well known for means you can still enjoy the game even if you're so out of the loop that you think Bumblebee is an actual bee.

Anyone who has played a Platinum action game (or even the likes of *Devil May Cry* or *God Of War*, to be fair) will feel instantly at home here. It feels closest to *Bayonetta*, particularly since transforming mid-combo is handled in a similar

“BAYONETTA WITH GIANT ROBOTS? YEAH, WE'RE OKAY WITH THIS. WE'RE ALL KINDS OF OKAY WITH THIS”

way to the witch's Wicked Weave attacks – chain light and heavy attacks in the right combinations and you're able to use vehicle form attacks as combo enders, whether it's swinging Prime's magic trailer at an enemy or turning into a car mid-air and ramming them (somehow) to knock them away. It's a simple system but a versatile one and even after only a short time with the game, it's clear that the potential for the kinds of insane combo videos that spring up around character action games is very much there. Character-specific abilities and weapons for each of the playable Autobots add another layer of depth and even more familiar elements from Platinum's past – we've seen a dodge mechanic

that triggers slow-motion akin to *Bayonetta*'s Witch Time and what kind of looked like a *Revengeance*-style parry so far, but no doubt there'll be even more besides. A greatest hits album of Platinum's world-class mechanics performed by the stars of our childhoods... what exactly is not to like about that?

Well, there is one little issue bouncing around in our minds that is preventing the hype train from hitting top speed, namely *Legend Of Korra*. Platinum's last cartoon tie-in with Activision was pretty poor (arguably the studio's only dud, in fact), although it's important to remember

that it was a low-budget digital title – *Transformers* is set for a full-price retail release, so we can only assume that there's a fair bit more money being thrown at it. Early impressions would corroborate this theory and while it's hard to gauge overall quality

from the small slice of action we've seen, the fact that we've come away thinking about combo options and potentially awesome boss battles (Devastator is in, so perhaps we'll get to fight the individual Constructicons that form him as well) is clearly a positive. When we heard rumblings of a new Platinum game, we initially longed for *Revengeance 2*. After seeing this, though, it turns out we actually want *Transformers: Devastation* even more. Sorry, Raiden.

**Luke Albigés**

PlatinumGames is getting ready to make dreams come true with **TRANSFORMERS: DEVASTATION**. Roll out to the website for more details: [www.transformersgame.com](http://www.transformersgame.com)







△×□ Most of the original voice cast return, making this the most faithful *Transformers* game ever made.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Cel-shaded visuals perfectly capture the original cartoon style.



It's by Platinum, a studio that seldom puts a foot wrong when it comes to action games.



Multiple playable Autobots, each with their own weapons and move sets.



The chance it could include classic tunes such as *The Touch and Dare*, as heard in the movie.

△×□ We never imagined Platinum would make a game in which Optimus Prime does his best *Bayonetta* impression, but we're so, so glad this is happening. Can't we just have it now, though?





ETA Q1 2016

PUB BETHESDA

DEV ID SOFTWARE

TWITTER @DOOM

# Doom

Shake, shake, shake the room!



**IT'S HARD TO** believe that it's been ten whole years since *Doom 3* chopped and shot its way onto consoles and PC. Since that game's release, we have been teased on an almost yearly basis by id Software that *Doom 4* was in some form of development, and at one point we *almost* had a *Doom* game that looked incredibly different to the game you see before you today here in these very pages of **Play**.

For that particular take on the franchise, the developers decided it would be a good idea to rebrand the *Doom* series with a dull colour palette and one-dimensional space marines that wouldn't feel out of place in a craptastic sci-fi flick, or the cinematic iteration of *Doom* itself for that matter.

id Software's studio director, Tim Willits, later explained that it wasn't necessarily one single element in this take that caused the game to get sidelined, rather it was more a case of identity crisis that led to its inevitable axing. For him and the others in the studio, this dull-looking riff on the

cult shooter lacked personality, soul and the kind of spirit that makes a *Doom* game a *Doom* game. Thankfully, then, Willits and his team saw fit to halt development on it, otherwise we may have wound up with something that put the series out to pasture for another generation.

Thank the gods of gaming, then, that this concept for *Doom 4* was shelved, and in its place rose the newly-titled *Doom*, a rip-roaring bombastic shooter that eschews the slow-burn horror of *Doom 3* and replaces it with the breakneck pace of the originals. Firefights are faster, enemies (lots of them) spawn from multiple positions, and you'll wield a variety of kick-ass and classic weapons like the shotgun, plasma rifle and – yeah, you guessed it – the chainsaw. In fact, in just a little under a year, you'll [LAN] party like it's 1993 when Bethesda rolls out this wondrously brutal beast.

Powered by the fancy new *id Tech 6* game engine, this revamped addition to the series comes complete with a raft of new gameplay

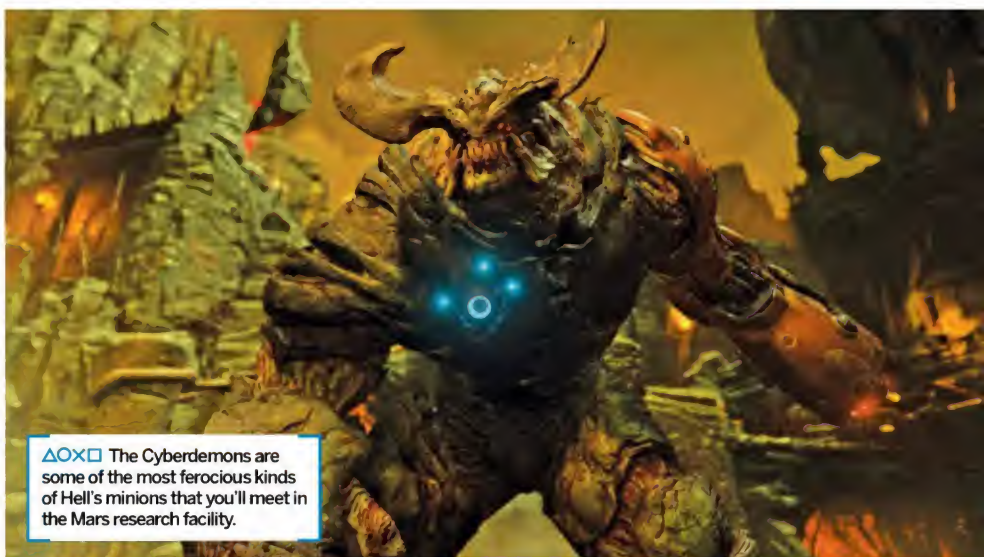
mechanics, including a freshly concocted slice of vertical gameplay. What the hell does that mean, you ask? It's a fancy way of saying jetpacks and double jumps. With these, you're able to leap across large gaps while raining down fire and bullets aplenty on the marauding demons invading the UAC research facility on Mars.

Let's be honest here, the ability to jump isn't exactly a revolutionary game mechanic. What's really got our juices flowing are the brutal hand-to-hand finishing moves that wouldn't look out of place in, say, a *Mortal Kombat* game. Finishers are nasty, cranking up the aggression level all the way to eleven billion as you scoop the beating hearts out of the fleshy chests of demons, tear off the jaw bones of cybernetic monsters, or just simply stomp a space ghoul's skull into a bloody, mushy pulp of blood, grey matter and bone.

If you've played *Doom*, you'll know this is not a game based around ducking behind cover – it's built on bedrock of ultraviolence. This is reflected in the sheer pace of the game compared to other



"FINISHERS ARE NASTY,  
CRANKING UP THE  
AGGRESSION LEVEL ALL  
THE WAY TO ELEVEN"



△○×□ The Cyberdemons are some of the most ferocious kinds of Hell's minions that you'll meet in the Mars research facility.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ Super-fast and furious gameplay that harks back to the pace of the original.
- It features a massive arsenal of jumbo-sized guns guaranteed to impress.
- × You'll love the brutal finishing moves the developers have cooked up for this one.
- Multiplayer will play a huge part in the final package released next spring.

shooters out there. Some enemies can even teleport in shootouts, meaning you'll have to think fast and never let your guard down.

This speedy gameplay style means reloading mechanics have been shelved and regenerative health systems have been replaced with good old-fashioned health packs. While not a whole lot of details have been spilled on multiplayer modes, we do know that Freeze Tag, Clan Arena and Domination will all play a part in the final package.

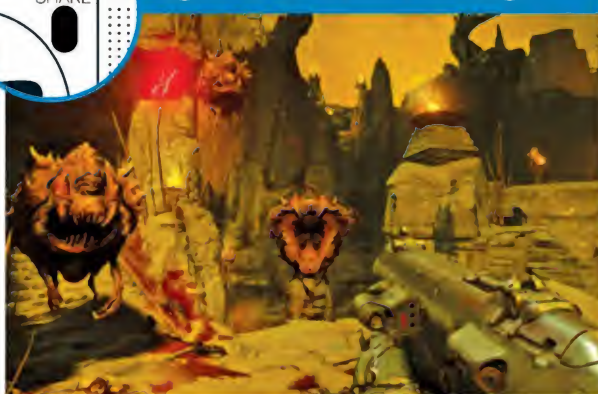
*Doom* games are supposed to be simplistic in design, crafted to make us feel fast and near-invincible as we wage a one-man war against Hell's minions, and this new *Doom* is applying that same design mantra, while making everything shinier, bloodier and even more kickass. This is going to be a long and painful wait...

Alex Donnelly

**DOOM 4** is being prepared by that hellish lot over at id Software. Prepare your chainsaws and boomsticks over at [www.idsoftware.com/en-gb](http://www.idsoftware.com/en-gb)



## SHARE THIS



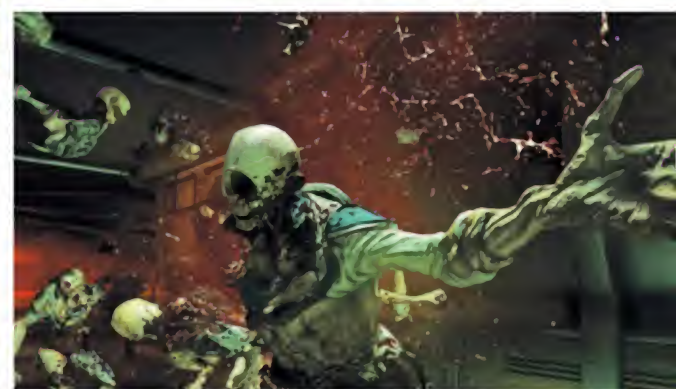
## THE END

This is how you die – horribly

While this new *Doom* adds a hefty amount of new gameplay mechanics into the mix, there's one thing in particular that we quite enjoyed from our time on the game, and that's the nod to the *Dead Space* series. Depending on what kills you in *Doom*, you're treated to a gruesome cut scene where arms are ripped off, or a massive hole is punched through your helmet. Hit that Share button and show the world!



△○×□ True to form, the new shotgun packs one hell of a punch. Blasting grunts into tiny pieces will simply never get old...





ETA Q4 2015 | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL | TWITTER @RAINBOW6GAME

# Rainbow Six Siege

Press X to miss wife



## WE CAN UNDERSTAND why

Ubisoft has been focusing on multiplayer when talking about *Rainbow Six Siege*, but that hasn't

stopped fans begging for news on what the game has in store when it comes to single-player, to which Ubisoft has finally responded.

Classic *Rainbow Six* mode, Terrohunt, is back, supporting both single-player and co-op. There will be four versions of the mode – the vanilla version, bomb disarmament, hostage protection and an as-yet mystery variant.

What's pleasing about Terrohunt is that it maintains the focus on the things that make us want to play the game's multiplayer (indeed, the fact that it has both attacking and defending modes makes it in many ways a replication of what's on offer in PvP). There are still no respawns and no regenerating health, meaning *Siege* still waits primed to kick you in the teeth as soon as you make a mistake. This means that caution, strategy and teamwork should be as important here as they are when you take the game online.

Ubisoft has also revealed some details on the game's story, to the extent that it has one. The

Rainbow Six program has been reactivated by a new Six and there are some terrorists called The White Masks that have formed because, as far as we can tell, you need some baddies to fight. Let's be honest, though – the story's not that important in a game like this. What's important is the intensity of those gunfights where you know one slip-up could be deadly, the tactical flexibility that you get from being able to blow holes through walls and ceilings at will, the importance of working in tandem with your allies to use each classes' abilities at the right moment to give you a strategic edge. That we're getting a single-player mode that tries to bring those things over from multiplayer can only be a good thing.

It won't be too long before we can start to judge to what extent the game is successful in doing that, because the *Siege* beta, which will feature both Terrohunt and PvP is coming to PS4 on 24 September. We'll see you online...

**Paul Walker-Emig**

Set a breaching charge on the walls at Ubisoft Montreal and you'll find the team developing **RAINBOW SIX SIEGE**. Check the website for more details: [rainbow6.ubi.com](http://rainbow6.ubi.com)





"SIEGE STILL WAITS PRIMED TO KICK YOU IN THE TEETH AS SOON AS YOU MAKE A MISTAKE"

## LISTEN & LEARN

Ubisoft reacts to fan feedback



The attitude that Ubisoft Montreal is taking to its community bodes well for the future of *Siege*. After the game's alpha, the studio has made a number of changes – hit markers have been removed except for friendly-fire and kill confirmation, the speed of operators is being reduced and heartbeat sensors have been nerfed, all in response to community feedback. That gives us hope that the developer will continue to improve the multiplayer experience with regular updates post-release.



△×□ Terrorist faction, the White Masks, take their name quite literally...





"A BEAUTIFUL-LOOKING  
PUZZLE-PLATFORMER,  
STARRING OUR NEW  
BEST FRIEND, YARNY"



ETA TBA | PUB EA | DEV COLDWOOD INTERACTIVE | TWITTER @UNRAVEL\_GAME

# Unravel

Get ready to feel feelings again

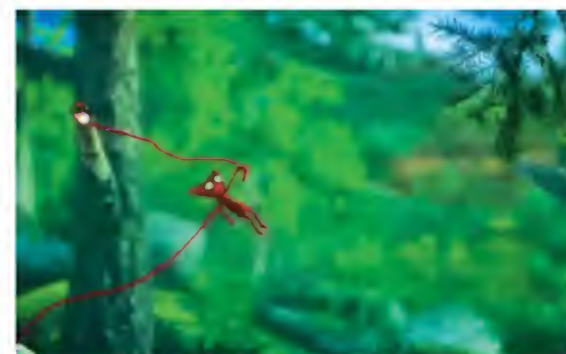


**AT SOME POINT** in the hazy future, amid the thunder of gunfire and the revving of engines, when everything is fire and explosions and crazy nonsense, a soft little world will arrive. A world where yarn represents love and the bonds we make with other people. Where you can achieve great things even though you're just *so small*. And yet, despite being achingly cute, we have a feeling that *Unravel* is going to get us a hell of a lot angrier than when we are shooting or punching things in the face.

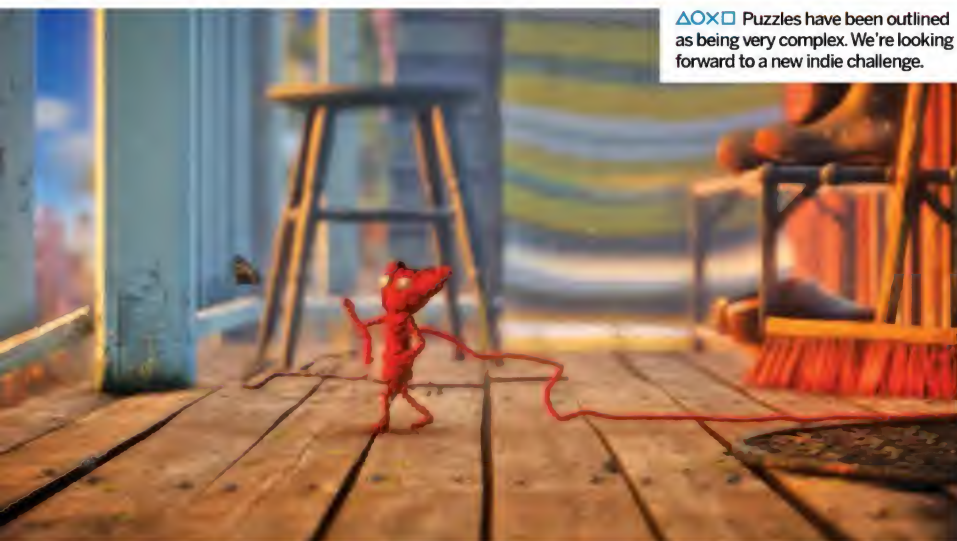
We love puzzle-platformers (it's clearly a genre for intensely creative developers), but they give us a feeling of deep dread, because adorable little indie games like this tend to only be adorable for the platformer bit, and not-so-deep down they're hiding all kinds of bastardry in the puzzling bits. It's why we love them, though; it's not proper dread, more that we know we turn into angry completionists and throw things when we can't solve a puzzle, and there's only so many times you can throw a pad down in frustration before you inevitably break something important.

But it's time to get over the anger and get back to the loveliness. *Unravel* is a beautiful-looking puzzle-platformer, starring our new best friend, Yarny. This little red cat-like guy was created two years ago by the creative director on a camping trip. Literally created. As in, on a camping trip with his family in northern Sweden, Martin Sahlin found some tyre wire and a ball of wool and made a physical little something he named Yarny. Which he then took a bunch of photos of; in trees, on rivers, dragging rocks around (our new favourite phrase is 'figuring out fun ways you can use your yarn'). And just look at it. Just look at its little eyes, its pointy ears... Look at it; you can't tell us you can't wait to throw Yarny around a giant world fraught with peril. Which is good, because that's basically the game. You have a limited supply of yarn, though, and you have to use what you have to try to make it through the area. We hope there'll be some kind of rewind mechanic, like *Braid*, should you get to a point and realise that Yarny is all out of string, but if not it'll need to be something that doesn't break the flow of the level, because there are some beautiful areas in *Unravel*.

△×□ Apparently the story will be told silently, which is exactly what we want. No terrible vocal acting ruining this, please.







△OX□ Puzzles have been outlined as being very complex. We're looking forward to a new indie challenge.

## CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH

Yarny joins a rich tapestry of gaming heroes



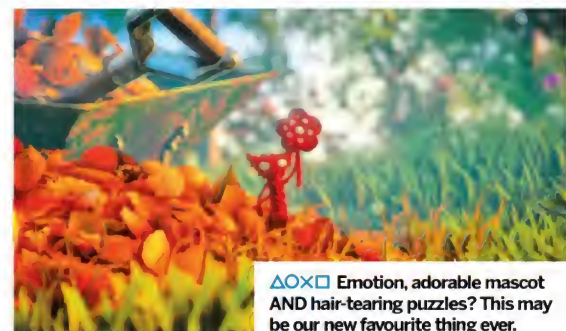
**SACKBOY**  
The self-styled Sony mascot. We love this little hessian fool so much.

**PIKMIN**  
Take Spinal Tap's advice: listen to what the flower people say, ya hear?

**FEZ**  
Gomez looks like he would probably be delicious. All mallowy...

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ Yarny! He's just adorable. We love him the most already. It's love at first sight.
- Curious mechanics involving being cleverly conservative with yarn.
- × Absolutely beautiful Sweden-inspired natural settings.
- Can we say Yarny again? No? Okay, how about the music? It sounds lovely.



△OX□ Emotion, adorable mascot AND hair-tearing puzzles? This may be our new favourite thing ever.

And all of this comes from Coldwood Interactive. What? You don't know Coldwood? Why, it's a studio famous for such classics as *Move Fitness* and *Ski-Doo Challenge*. Yeah, we hadn't heard of them either. Now, we're not saying that those games weren't labours of love. Maybe all those at Coldwood are super into sports, and the world needs games like those. Probably. But can you see anyone pouring their heart out on stage at E3, getting all choked up about how far the studio has come when talking about *Skiracing 2006*? When a studio can build itself up and put something together that clearly holds much more meaning for everyone involved, that's the kind of thing we can really get behind.

It's insanely refreshing to see some genuine emotion from a studio these days, to hear this sort of story. If that's making you throw up in the back of your mouth a little, we do understand. We'd probably feel the same if someone tried to tell us all about how their new favourite game

is, like, totally gloriously adorable, and all that *X-Factor* sob story/PR bullshit. But if that's what Coldwood is doing with *Unravel*, then our heartstrings are being so expertly pulled that we don't even mind if we're being played. We just want Yarny in our lives. We felt the same way when we saw *Flower* for the first time, not to mention *The Unfinished Swan*, *Fez*, *Journey*, *Braid*... And it's time. It's time for this new generation's gorgeous puzzle-platformer that makes you smile, makes you think. Sometimes you know something great is going to happen, and when you feel that feeling, it's time to quiet your 'too-cool' side and get excited. You have got adventuring with Yarny to look forward to; now tell your cynical self to take a hike.

**Rebecca Richards**

**UNRAVEL** is being developed by little Swedish studio Coldwood Interactive, who really haven't done anything like this before: [unravelgame.com/en\\_GB](http://unravelgame.com/en_GB)



ETA 2016 | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL | TWITTER @FORHONORGAME

# For Honor

...and Glory!



**THE MOMENT WE** realised that *For Honor* is a game that we really want to play was the moment we realised that its combat system means it's basically a 3D *Nidhogg*. Okay, so there's a bit more to it than that, but the core combat system is the same and that's really appealing to us. If you've not played *Nidhogg*, then this is probably going to need a bit of explaining.

When you find yourself engaged in one-on-one melee combat with another player, you can block left, right and high and have the option to attack those same three positions. This makes fights a

bit more interesting that 'press Square to attack', necessitating that you keep on your toes and respond to your opponents' movements to block incoming attacks from the correct direction, while also looking for the right opening to break their defences down. In aiding you to do that, other moves such as dodges and guard breaks can be utilised, too. We really like the idea of making combat encounters seem truly meaningful, challenging you as they do to anticipate your human foe's moves in high-tension back-and-forth battles that play into the fantasy of you being a skilled swordsman, much like the

aforementioned *Nidhogg* or the PlayStation classic, *Bushido Blade*.

As well as fighting other human players in *For Honor*'s four-on-four multiplayer matches, there will be AI grunts allied with each team. You'll need to take these foes out in order to grab capture points for your team in the only mode we've had a significant look at, Dominion. Taking those enemies out is far simpler than it is a human controlled opponent – you don't need to block and attack in the same way and can mow them down quickly in order to grab control points for your team. Again, we like the way that this plays

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

▲ There are three factions to choose from, based on Samurai, knights and Vikings.

□ Success in combat will unlock special unique attacks called 'Feats'.

✕ You can taunt your friends once you've lopped their heads off in a successful battle.

○ Teaming up with allies could create some really interesting scenarios.

"ITS COMBAT SYSTEM MEANS IT'S BASICALLY A 3D NIDHOGG"

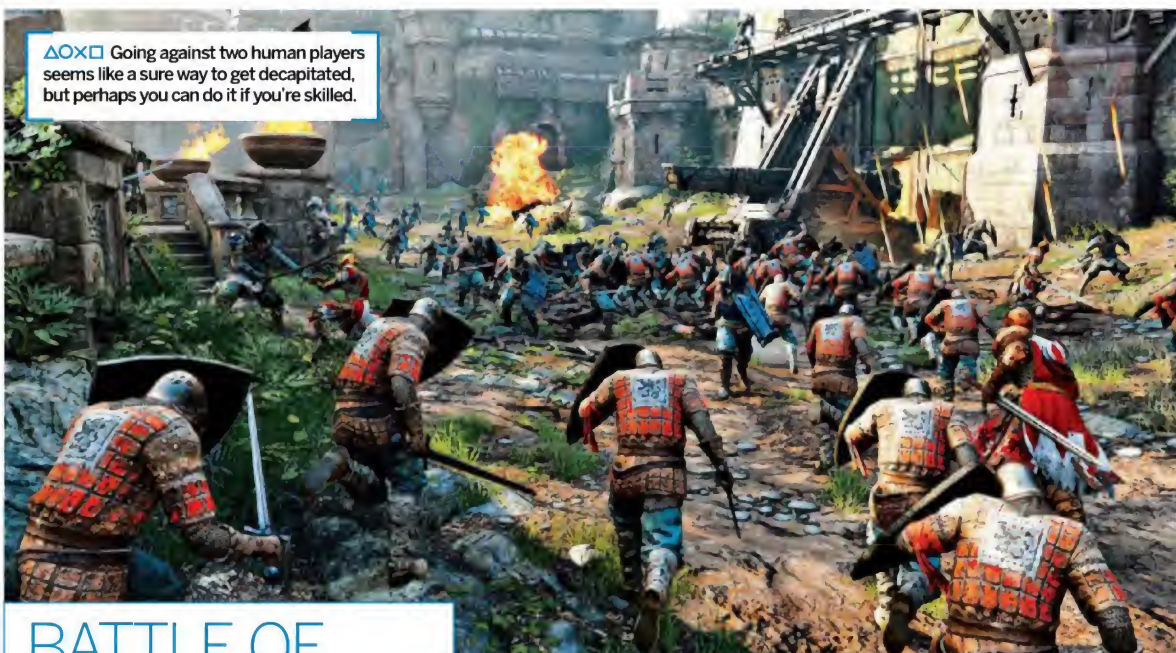




## BLAST FROM THE PAST

**BUSHIDO BLADE** *For Honor's* developers have been open about being inspired by *Bushido Blade*, saying they want to capture the same feeling of being a warrior.

△○×□ Going against two human players seems like a sure way to get decapitated, but perhaps you can do it if you're skilled.



## BATTLE OF THE BEST

Who would win in a fight between Samurai, knights and Vikings? *For Honor* wants you to find out...

### THE LEGIONS

Ubisoft haven't given us a great level of detail on how each faction differs, but it looks like The Legions is the jack of all trades faction, its knights having a good balance between, speed, attack power and defence.

### THE CHOSEN

This Samurai-like class is weaker than The Legions faction, but compensates with increased speed. We've seen one of this faction's special abilities, which unleashes a volley of arrows on your foes.

### THE WARBORN

The Viking-inspired Warborn faction is the one we know least about. We can make an educated guess, though – we think these warriors will be slow, but will compensate with powerful attacks.



into the fantasy of there being powerful warriors on the battlefield – you can chop down most of the soldiers opposing you at will, but when you encounter another human player, you better bring your A-game. Now you're facing someone that's really a threat, engaged in a fight that's almost a mini boss battle, a fight that really means something. That goes doubly in Dominion mode once you've bagged over 1000 points for your team. Reaching that milestone disables your opponents' ability to respawn, meaning that those one-on-one encounters should gain even more intensity as they become battles to the death.

There are some really cool ideas in *For Honor* and, as far as we can determine at this early stage, there's an understanding of the way that multiplayer combat can be built in such a way that each encounter feels epic. Whether it will feel as skilful and rewarding as, say, *Nidhogg*, in practice remains to be seen, but the early signs are good.

We'd like to see more of what the game has to offer in terms of modes – as, we said, we've only had a look at Dominion so far. Are there going to be modes that mix up the way you approach the game in interesting ways? Are there going to be modes that test your strategic acumen as much as they do your combat ability? Can we have a huge chaotic free-for-all mode set in a classic arena? We'll have to wait and see.

If Ubisoft Montreal can get that combat system right, we're going to be on board no matter what modes are available to play. It's a big 'if', sure, but the concept and ideas are sound – let's just hope the implementation of that potentially awesome melee system is of the standard it needs to be.

**Paul Walker-Emig**

**FOR HONOR** is being forged in the fires at Ubisoft Montreal. Check the website for more details: [ubisoft.com/en-US/game/for-honor/](http://ubisoft.com/en-US/game/for-honor/)



# Instant Expert

## Hitman PS4

### HOLIDAY HITMAN

In the lead-up to Christmas, *Hitman* will be hitting PS4 – on 8 December, to be precise. What makes things a little different here is that the game will be released digitally and that it will be a base from which *Hitman* will grow rather than a 'finished' game per se. Developer IO Interactive has said that it will be a live and ever-expanding world with new locations, missions and hits added as time goes on. An interesting approach for sure, but will it work?

### ONE SHOT

Taking inspiration from the likes of the daily challenge in games like *Spelunky*, *Hitman* will experiment with introducing hits that only give you one chance. There will, for example, be a target that will be around for 48 hours. If you try to assassinate them and mess it up, they get away. There's potential for this to be really cool, firstly because it will force you to improvise, and secondly because the tension will be high when you know you've only got one chance.

### LOOSEY GOOSEY

If we're to believe what IO Interactive is saying, *Hitman* will be open in how it lets you approach your objectives, allowing you to carry out intricate hits where you're never noticed, through to letting you chop down your target with an axe in front of everybody. The problem is, IO said this about the last *Hitman* game and that didn't capture the sense of freedom and openness that the earlier *Hitman* games had. Let's hope the team has got that back.

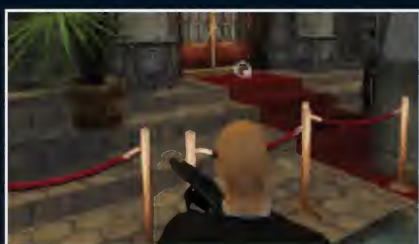
### COMMUNITY CONTRACTS

The last *Hitman* game introduced a feature that allowed you to create your own assassination missions – choosing the location, setting the target and so on. An expanded version of that will be returning in the new *Hitman*. We've mixed feelings about that – it was a good idea that not many people used, but it could become more significant in this version, where community contracts could give us something to do while we're waiting for new content.

### CROWD CONTROL

While it might not have lived up to the legacy of *Hitman* in many ways, one aspect of *Hitman: Absolution* that we really liked was the impressive large crowds that the game was able to support. We've always liked the idea of hiding in plain sight in *Hitman* games and those large crowds were a cool way of feeling like you could blend into the background – we hope to see that feature return come December.

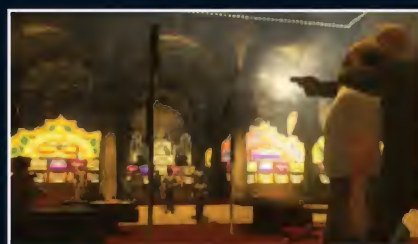
## HISTORY OF HITMAN



It was a little bit ropery in some ways, but the first *Hitman*, *Codename 47*, encouraged a certain creativity in the player that made it incredibly appealing. It's not the *Hitman* game we'd recommend you play if you've never played a *Hitman* game before, though.



*Silent Assassin*, the second game in the series, refined the mechanics established in *Codename 47* without losing the flexibility that made it unique, cementing the series' reputation. It also has an awesome mission set in St. Petersburg, Russia...



The game that's usually considered the peak of *Hitman*, however, is *Blood Money*, released in 2006, which introduced some new mechanics and increased the possibilities at your fingertips. This is your starting point if you've never played *Hitman*.



It all went a bit wrong with *Absolution*, which wasn't a terrible game, but which left hardcore *Hitman* fans unhappy due to the lack of flexibility in comparison to previous games. It also happens to have a terrible story with awful characterisation.



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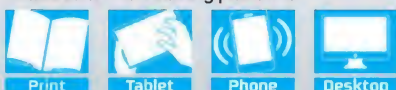


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# PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

## 1 STREET FIGHTER V

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2016

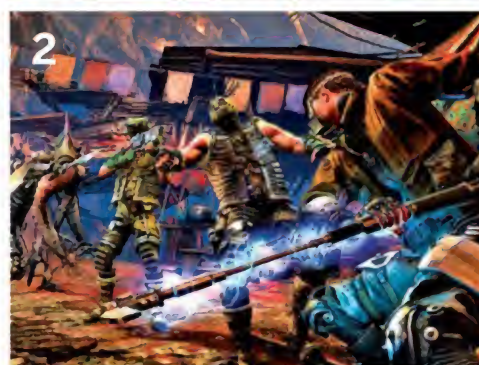
**THERE ARE A** number of things that we are liking about *Street Fighter V*. For one, it's great to see Birdie and Cammy make a return (the former might not get as much love from the community, but we like him). More importantly, though, going hands-on with the game has us optimistic about the direction it's taking. The game is clearly taking its influence from the *Alpha* series, as is evident in the art style, the roster, and mechanics, such as the return of Alpha Counters, which allow you to reverse an attack while blocking. From what we've played, those changes work in favour for a fighting game that's already solid well ahead of release and that can only bode well for the finished product.

## 2 THE TECHNOMANCER

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

**IT BILLS ITSELF** as a cyberpunk game and you can see why, but the aesthetics of the post-apocalypse are also a key part of *The Technomancer's* visual style, bringing to mind the likes of *Rage* and *Fallout: New Vegas*. Developer Spiders Games describes it as an action RPG and with that come the kinds of systems you'd expect – skill trees, crafting and, most pleasingly from our perspective, the option to complete quests in different ways, including non-violently. A passing similarity to *Fallout* might doom it to be lost in the shadow of Bethesda's giant, but let's not write this game off before we've had a chance to play it.



## 3 DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING

FORMAT: PS4, PS3

RELEASE DATE: 15 SEPTEMBER

**HOUSE OF WOLVES** might still be keeping you happy for now, but those *Destiny* fans among you will no doubt hankering for your next fix soon. Well, when September rolls around, you'll get that in the form of the game's next expansion, *The Taken King*. As part of that, you'll get access to three new elemental subclasses and Supers – Arc for Warlocks, Void for Hunters and Solar for Titans. There will also be new Strikes, PvP maps and story missions but, unlike *House Of Wolves*, *The Taken King* will include a new Raid that will pit you against Oryx – a major antagonist in the game's lore. We're looking forward to stun-locking him.

## 4 UNTIL DAWN

FORMAT: PS4

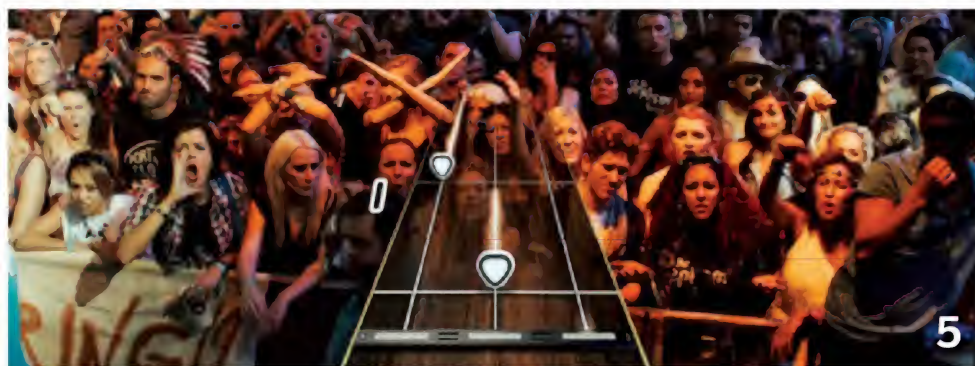
RELEASE DATE: 28 AUGUST

**OUR CONCERN WITH** *Until Dawn* has always been that the choices you make could end up being meaningless and the game may drag you down a linear path, pausing now and again to pretend it cares what you think. If what developer Supermassive says is true, however, we need have no such concerns. According to the developer, your choices will have actual serious consequences, causing the story to play out in a different fashion with each playthrough. It's possible for all characters to be offed by the serial killer, for them all to survive, or any permutation in between, depending on how you respond to situations. We're yet to be convinced it's going to be that open, but we'll see.





# ROUNDUP



## 5 GUITAR HERO LIVE

FORMAT: PS4  
RELEASE DATE: Q4 2015

**THE TRACK LISTING** for *Guitar Hero Live* is gradually starting to take shape, with over 50 songs already announced at the time of writing, from the spiritless, banal pop stylings of Ed Sheeran, to metal legends like Pantera, to the notoriously guitar-heavy music of Skrillex. That means there's going to be a few songs in there that float your boat. There are always going to be tracks you do and don't like in a game like this, though. What's got us interested in *Guitar Hero Live* is the new things it's doing, from the real-life footage it's using, to the new six-button guitar. Having played the game, we're sure the latter is going to be a success. On the former, we're not convinced we won't want to strangle our bandmates.



## 7 SOUTH PARK: THE FRACTURED BUT WHOLE

FORMAT: PS4  
RELEASE DATE: Q2 2016

**WE'RE DELIGHTED TO** see that there's going to be another *South Park* RPG, because we really liked *The Stick Of Truth*. This time around, it's superheroes that will be the source of parody. There's also a new developer with Ubisoft San Francisco replacing Obsidian. Trey Parker and Matt Stone have suggested that they weren't happy with the quality of *Stick Of Truth* due to the fact that, in Cartman's words, it was "barely even an RPG." If *TFBH* proves to be a more involved RPG that retains that *South Park* quality in its production values, then we'll be very happy indeed.

## 6 NEED FOR SPEED

FORMAT: PS4  
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

**WHILE WE THOUGHT** the last *Need For Speed*, *Rivals*, was a good game, there's undeniably a sense that it failed to capture the imagination of fans, in the way that past games in the series have a sense that there was something lacking. Hence why EA has decided to have a bit of a rethink and come back with a rebooted *Need For Speed*. All we can say from what we've seen so far is that the game is looking incredible from a visual standpoint. As with any racing game, though, that doesn't mean a thing if it doesn't handle well. Until we get a chance to, metaphorically, sit at the wheel and take a test drive, we'll refrain from making judgements on whether this one's worth getting excited about.

## 8 UNCHARTED: THE NATHAN DRAKE COLLECTION

FORMAT: PS4  
RELEASE DATE: 9 OCTOBER

**WE WOULDN'T NECESSARILY** call *The Nathan Drake Collection* a surprise given that the trend for HD remakes made this one kind of predictable, but it's cool to see the *Uncharted* trilogy coming to PS4 anyway. Indeed, if you've not played the *Uncharted* games on PS3, a remastered edition should prove to be an excellent package that will allow you to see what all the fuss is about. *The Drake Collection* won't include the multiplayer components, but that isn't a big deal in our eyes, given that it's the single-player campaigns for which the series is famed.





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# HOT TOPIC INDIE GAMES

**PAUL WALKER-EMIG**  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER, PLAY

"INDIES AREN'T  
HOLDING TRIPLE-A BACK"



I LOVE **INDIE** games. For that reason, I've been delighted with the open approach that Sony has taken with indie developers and the efforts it has made to get their games onto PlayStation platforms. We've had some bloody awesome ones, too: the artful and atmospheric *Journey*; the intense and rewarding *Hotline Miami*; Telltale's gripping *The Walking Dead* series; smart puzzler *The Swapper*; the experimental *The Unfinished Swan*; the colorful *Guacamelee*. There's such a diverse range of indie games to choose from – far more diverse than what you tend to get from triple-A studios, incidentally – covering such a vast array of genres *and* hitting such a high benchmark of quality, that I can't fathom why indie games get so much hate.

Take *Hotline Miami* as an example. It's easily one of, if not *the* best action game released in years. Not the best *indie* action game, the best *action* game full stop. What I'm getting at is that it's hard not to think that those who bemoan the volume of indie games on PlayStation just aren't giving them a chance, because so many of them match up to anything triple-A has to offer when it comes to quality, creativity and aesthetics.

Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that all indie games are worse than triple-A



games, the criticism of PlayStation and its large roster of indies still doesn't make any sense. Take one of the most common complaints you hear: that people are fed up of seeing indie games come to PS4 when what they actually want are more triple-A games. It's fine if you think there are not enough triple-A games on offer, but why do you think indie games have anything to do with that? If indie developers stopped making games for PlayStation, it's not going to magically increase the rate and number of triple-A games coming to PS4. All you're asking for when you admonish Sony for bringing indies to PlayStation is to have less games to choose from and that can't be good for anyone.

You shouldn't underestimate the impact that indie games have had on making the PS4 the



console that's leading this generation. Sony got a *lot* of good press for its attitude to indie developers on the road to release and managed to generate buzz for its console by showing off games like *No Man's Sky*. We're not saying that indie is the reason that the PS4 is the leading console this gen, but we are saying it has played its part in making it a successful console that publishers want to have their triple-A games on.

I feel like the main source of the vitriol towards indie games, however, is PS Plus. Every month, Sony announces a few free indie games as part of its PS Plus offering and every month people complain that they aren't getting triple-A games. The question has to be asked: what do people think would happen if Sony decided not to offer us these indie titles? You think Activision is suddenly going to decide to give us all *Call Of Duty* for free? You think Sony is saying to EA, 'we're not interested in having *FIFA* on PS Plus, because we've got this indie that we want to give away'? No. If those indie games weren't on PS Plus, *you would be getting fewer games*.

Indies aren't holding triple-A back. They're giving us incredible experiences and if you're don't care about them, you're missing out.



△×□ When *No Man's Sky* comes out, it'll prove that indies can not only match triple-A developers when it comes to scale, but can best them.





## DREW SLEEP

PRODUCTION EDITOR, PLAY

"I'M NOT SOLD, NOT YET, AT LEAST"

## WHO DO YOU AGREE WITH?

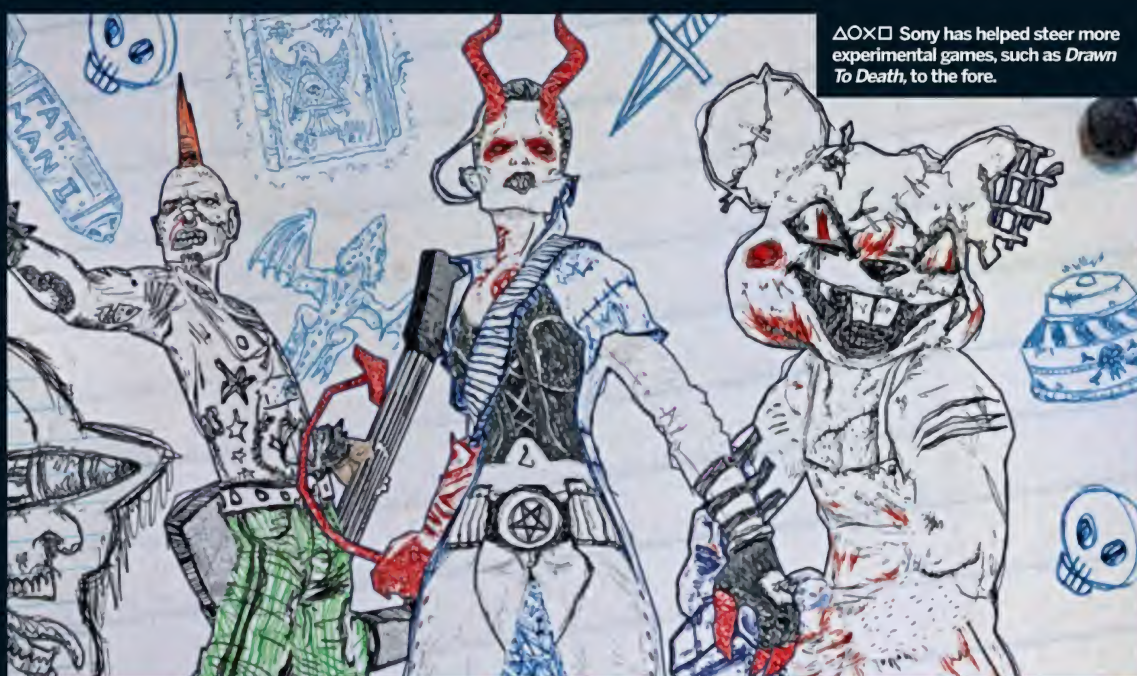
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INDIE GAMES ARE grossly overrated. There, I said it. For some reason we, as a community, have elevated the likes of Jonathan Blow (*Braid*), Mike Bithell (*Thomas Was Alone*) and Phil Fish (*Fez*) to untouchable geniuses but, really, they're just okay. *Vanilla. Braid* is by no means a 9/10 masterpiece; it's a short platformer with a gimmick that overstays its welcome. *Thomas Was Alone* is not a marvellous creation; it's a game where you bounce various quadrilaterals around for a few hours before it vanishes from your memory. *Fez*, while deserving a lot of its praise, still frustratingly forced you to backtrack. By no means am I saying that these games are bad. I'm saying they're mediocre. Satisfactory.

I feel like now is a good time to throw up a pre-emptive disclaimer: I *do* like indie games. Heck, indie games alone are keeping my beloved Vita alive, and, as a backer for *Bloodstained: Ritual Of The Night*, I love that indie gaming is keeping Koji Igarashi in a job. It's also great that Sony is lending a helping hand for indie devs – without that support I wouldn't have been able to ruin my parents' Christmas by playing *Outlast* or *The Binding Of Isaac* on the family TV. I just have my concerns. You see, dear reader, for every great turdy dungeon-crawler starring naked babies is a tonne of *Whoa Daves*; for every stunning perspective-altering platformer, there is an unstoppable army of *Aaru's Awakenings*.

"But Drew," I hear you cry, "magazines and publications like **Play** are supposed to find the good indies for us." And you're right. We have



△×□ Sony has helped steer more experimental games, such as *Drawn To Death*, to the fore.

our very own indie hipster at your service to do just that (hi Paul). The trouble is, though, this influx of poor indies is already hitting you where it hurts: in the IGC, specifically the PS4 IGC. The vast majority of PS4 IGC games since its release have been indie games. That alone is kind of taking the piss, but I'd let it slide if the games were actually *good*. Alas they are not – a large amount of these games aren't up to scratch. *Contrast*? No thanks. *Mercenary Kings*? Nah, you're alright, mate. *Tower Of Guns*? NO. What did you expect, though? Why should Sony go out of its way to secure something substantial for the PS4 at a greater cost in terms of effort and, potentially, money when they have indie developers who are begging for their game to get some exposure?

Again, Sony supporting indies is a good thing, but jamming subpar games on a service that is supposed to offer users a collection of *great* games is nothing short of unacceptable. It is true the indie games that Sony has had more of a hand in, such as the astoundingly brilliant *The Unfinished Swan*, are a significantly better experience, and I would enjoy to see this trend continue. But who knows if upcoming Sony-steered indie



games like *Drawn To Death* are going to hit that standard? I'm not sold, not yet, at least.

Indie gaming suffers from the same issues as its triple-A sister industry. There are droves of clones and genres have been oversaturated – I'm looking at you, retro side-scrollers. The only difference is that indie gaming is unpredictable. You know that an *Assassin's Creed* game is likely to be a mess at launch, but if a game called *Super Exploding Zoo* drops on your lap, who knows if it's going to be a blockbuster or an utter fart? If we were to stop this storm of good and bad games, though, we'd be killing the creativity that indies are known for. It looks like we're stuck with this shit, so we may as well get used to it.





# THE THRILL OF THE HUNT

Monster Hunter and its clones are huge in Japan, but why hasn't the trend caught on in the West? Luke Albigés gives the monsters a break in order to investigate...





**C**ultural differences are something you see a lot of in videogame appreciation, but the hunting phenomenon is one thing that never ceases to baffle. Just look at PSP classic *Monster Hunter Freedom Unite*... around 80 per cent of sales were in Japan, a statistic that we'd struggle to draw a European or US parallel to even if we tried. And we did. But couldn't. Even stuff like *FIFA* falls shy of that kind of majority, which makes us wonder – what's so different about these cultures that means a brilliant game sells four times as many copies on its home turf than it does in the rest of the world combined?

The first part of this question is easy, and can be answered with the word 'commuters'. While many of us would perhaps rather have kept to ourselves and enjoyed a little PSP or DS time on a bus or train, Japan's commuters would instead pool their resources and co-op with strangers for the greater good. It's something we wish had taken off over here – imagine being able to do a quick quest or two on the Tube instead of standing awkwardly next to someone who may or may not understand the concept of personal hygiene. Truth be told, we generally don't have as far to go on our commuter trains as our Japanese friends but still, we'd happily fight alongside randoms – just as we do online so often – if it meant squeezing in a little bit of extra grinding each day. But it wasn't just 'a little extra grinding' – while we were all staring at our phones cutting ropes, tending

to shit virtual farms and lobbing miffed birds around, those lucky buggers in Japan were teaming up to take down huge monsters. In an *actual* videogame. As much as our culture pretends to have accepted gaming, it still appears to be struggling to understand what is actually good about the medium.

But then along comes *Demon's Souls* and the hardcore won't shut up about how well it handles bosses and complex combat mechanics. In actual fact, that experience has been around since the PS2 days, if you'd have cared to look for it. The original *Souls* game's hub-based structure even made it feel closer to *Monster Hunter* than any other game in the series has since – go into level, kill boss, get loot, well done – so it's surprising that this parallel hasn't been drawn sooner. Come on, people. Is it really so great a leap of logic? We're genuinely surprised there isn't a lot more crossover between *Souls* fans and hardcore hunters, but then Capcom hasn't exactly made it easy for chosen undead to make the leap to carving up massive beasts and turning their bits into fancy new gear.

Despite originally creating the hunting sub-genre on PS2 and dominating with it on PSP (*Monster Hunter* is the biggest-selling franchise on the system, fact fans), Capcom seems to have given up on Sony platforms in recent years. Japan got a port of *Portable 3rd* on PS3 and a version of pseudo-MMO spin-off *Frontier* on Vita, but nothing has come west since *Freedom Unite*. At least, not to PlayStation – 3DS is where it's at these days for *MH* action, although Capcom's assumed defection has seen a string of new challengers pop up to





try and fill the Rathalos-shaped gap in the Vita catalogue. Some have been great (*Soul Sacrifice* and *Toukiden* chief among them), others not so much (sorry, *Ragnarok Odyssey*) but in truth, none *really* does the same job. Those looking to transition from a home RPG to a hunting game will naturally want to start with the real deal, making the myriad copycats only really good for existing hunters looking for a fix now that Capcom and *Monster Hunter* are apparently in bed with Nintendo.

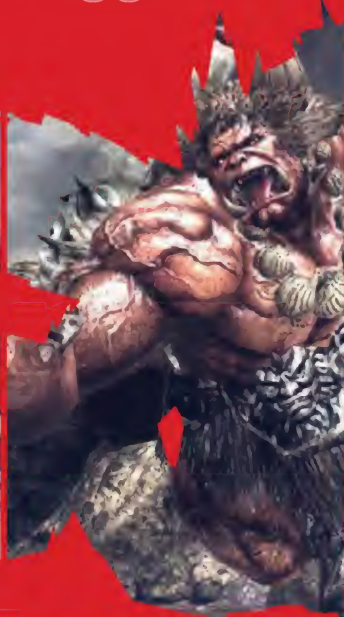
The fact remains, however, that it's incredibly strange that such a hardcore following has popped up around the *Souls* games while *Monster Hunter* never managed to escape cult status, despite so many glaring similarities

between the two franchises. Giant, well-designed bosses with attack patterns so complex they seem impossible but with enough room to learn them to the degree that you can achieve victory unscathed? Check. Varied weapon pool that gives players a unique set of tools to use with their favourite instrument of death? Check. Thrilling co-op action where the above can be shared with a number of friends? Yep, that's another check, and that's before you even start to factor in similarities with other popular games and trends. There are still millions of *Destiny* players logging on every week in the hope that something they do will earn



## CRAFTING THE ULTIMATE HUNTER

Which elements would we pick from around the genre to make the perfect hunting game?



### COMBAT MONSTER HUNTER

It's the core combat model that the rest emulate, so why wouldn't we want the original when it comes to fighting mechanics? Every weapon has its own tricks to learn, and moves that work best on certain parts of any monster. If you see us packing a hammer, stay the hell away from the head if you know what's good for you.

### STORY SOUL SACRIFICE

It's pretty low on the priority list, but *Soul Sacrifice* showed that it is possible to tell good stories in the confines of a hunting game. Each mission adds to the lore of the world, the monsters and the main villain of the game, every scene filling in gaps and making everything you do that much more interesting and meaningful.

### WORLD DRAGON'S DOGMA

There's no doubt that *Monster Hunter*'s world could use some work, but there are plenty of examples of large bosses roaming more open play spaces – *Dark Souls* also fits this bill to a degree but *Dragon's Dogma* does a better job of having its large creatures wander plains rather than hiding behind fog gates for the most part.

### LOOT DIABLO III

No *MH* veteran could say that one per cent drops on rare stuff are a good thing, so maybe it's time for a change. *Diablo* had rare goodies first time out, but the patched version made changes to help speed progression along – more rare stuff means better junk and the ability to trade stuff in for even more chances at top-end gear.

### NOVELTY EVOLVE

*Evolve*'s core was a good one – letting players take on the role of a boss had barely been done before and was a cool evolution of boss rush gaming. Make this its own mode, give a player control of the monster, have specials work with stocks rather than cooldowns and make taunts refill all stocks to give hunters a chance to attack.





them their Gjallarhorns, whereas *MH* has a way fairer and more versatile loot system where the grind actually offers relatively regular rewards. You could even argue that there are similarities to MOBA team setups within *MonHan*'s co-op, with assigned roles enabling skilled teams to bring down beasts in the fraction of a time that it would take a bunch of spamming randoms.

The true thrill of a good hunting game lies not in the actual defeat of the boss but what comes after. Carves, drops or whatever you care to call them are your reward for overcoming such adversity, and your only friend at this stage is Lady Luck. Some will find nothing but junk, while others will luck into Gems and Plates galore... that's just part of the game. But that's the key difference between hunting games and more traditional RPGs – getting the materials one piece at a time is so much more satisfying than hitting a lucky drop and just banking the useless gear. You get to build your top tier gear out of your own achievements when you finally get there, as opposed to simply lucking into one random piece of gear at a time. With a full crafting system, there's so much more potential for everything you find – a rare drop could help you in all

manner of ways rather than just being a good/bad addition to your arsenal.

And perhaps that's part of the problem. Perhaps gamers today would rather roll dice for a shot at immediate greatness than put the time in and actually earn it. Perhaps games like *Destiny* have spoiled the lucky few who managed to get the good stuff early and bred a culture where chasing chance is preferable to actually putting in the hours to earn something. Random loot drops are common enough these days but all too often, it's the same all-or-nothing deal – *The Witcher 3* did a

great job of only offering raw materials as drops so hopefully that'll help the entitled massive realise that there's more to beating a problem than the promise of instantly useful freebies at the end of the quest line.

So while you wait for *Dark Souls III*, *Bloodborne* DLC, *The Taken King* or anything else where

loot and skill sit side by side, don't just replay the old games or hit up the third rate pretenders – nobody needs to be wasting their time with *Defiance* or *Lords Of The Fallen*. Instead, consider branching out with a sidestep into something new and try out a hunting game. *Monster Hunter Freedom Unite* is available on Vita, *Portable 3rd* got a PS3 remaster in Japan (a perfect challenge if you love the mystery of the *Souls* games) or you could grab something more recent like *Soul Sacrifice Delta* or *Toukiden Kiwami*, both excellent games. We won't even turn our noses up if you choose to track Capcom's series to Wii U or 3DS – it's a noble cause and *Monster Hunter 4* is the best in the series so far. Come and join the hunt. We'll see you in the Gathering Hall...

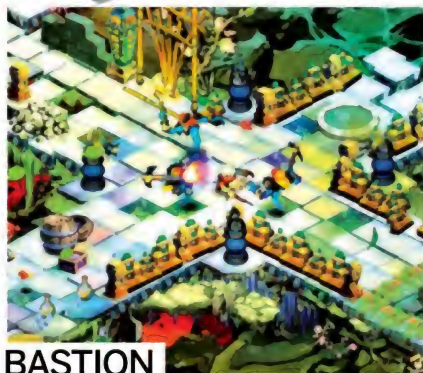






# ★★★★★ BEST OF THE ★★★★★★ POST-APOCALYPSE

WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE FOR DEVELOPERS TO LET THEIR IMAGINATIONS RUN WILD THAN TO WIPE EVERYTHING OUT AND START AGAIN?



## BASTION

**TAKING PLACE AFTER** an event called 'The Calamity', *Bastion* never lets you forget that its post-apocalyptic nature defines it, constructed as it is from bits and pieces of the pre-disaster world left floating isolated in the void. The unstable nature of *Bastion's* world is made evident when you collect a Core – an artifact that holds the world together – at the end of a level. And upon collecting a Shard, the area you are in falls apart as you flee to escape.



## JOURNEY

**PROOF THAT THE** term 'post-apocalyptic' doesn't mean the game you're playing is dark, drab and violent is to be found in the beautiful *Journey*. The cool thing about the way *Journey* presents its post-apocalyptic world is that it's not filled with exposition about what happened and why. That lets you discover the ruins of the civilization that came before you as you glide across the game's desert in order to retain a sense of mystery.



## HALF-LIFE 2

**THE OPENING TO** *Half-Life 2* does an excellent job of introducing you to a dystopian world that, following the events of the first game, is now controlled by the Combine. The Eastern Europe-inspired City 17

has become particularly iconic as a vision of a post-invasion Earth under a repressive, dictatorial force. *Half-Life 2* also happens to be one of the greatest games of all time, which helps it find its way on this list.



## METRO REDUX

**ONE OF THE** great things about the *Metro* games is the way they really sell the hostility of post-nuclear Russia when you are forced to venture out from the safety of the underground systems into the world above. The

cloying fear of running out of air as you search for fresh filters for your gas mask in those brief forays above ground adds extra tension to exploring a landscape that is populated with mutated creatures.





## TOKYO JUNGLE

**UNQUESTIONABLY THE MOST** lighthearted of our pick of post-apocalyptic games is the bizarre *Tokyo Jungle*. In this version of the future, animals rule, with hyenas, beagles, tigers, giraffes, deer, bears and more battling for supremacy on the overgrown streets of Tokyo. The only game in which you can see a Pomeranian maul a lion, *Tokyo Jungle* is a cool little survival game that's unique, if nothing else.



## CHRONO TRIGGER

**THE WHOLE POINT** of this game is to stave off the threat of the end of the world, heralded by the coming of creature called Lavos, who gradually saps the planet of its energy. To do that, you find yourself traveling across time and space, witnessing the destruction of a civilization and visiting the dystopian wastelands of the future as you desperately search for a way to take Lavos down. What makes this classic JRPG a bit different as a post-apocalyptic game, then, is the fact that you get to see the world both before and after things have gone to pot as you career back and forth through time.



## THE LAST OF US

**THE GREAT THING** about *The Last Of Us*' brutal post-apocalyptic world is that it really captures a sense of loss through its brilliantly crafted main characters. In Joel, you see a man who is now defined by what happened to him in the world's descent into utter chaos, terrified of letting his guard down lest history repeats itself. In Ellie, you see a character that barely understands the cultural detritus of the civilization that came before the one she grew up in, but who nonetheless pines for a world that she can never fully comprehend as she is condemned to live in this brutal new epoch.



## DEUS EX

**THE COOL THING** about *Deus Ex*'s apocalypse is that it uses it as a way of commenting on the world that we're living in. You see, the thing is, in *Deus Ex*, the apocalypse doesn't apply to the rich and successful. Inequality has been exacerbated by a pandemic called the Gray Death, with limited supplies of the vaccine reserved for the rich and powerful while the poor suffer and die. Mind you, this is a *Deus Ex* game, though, so a conspiracy might just be afoot...



## THE WALKING DEAD

**TELLTALE'S ADAPTATION OF** the hit graphic novel is a game that brings something more interesting than your bog-standard zombie apocalypse scenario. Instead, the focus is on how conditions can push people to the limit, forcing them to consider extremes that they never would have in their pre-apocalypse life. You really feel the effects of the world in this game, pushing you into making tough choices related to the survival of yourself and your companions.



## FALLOUT 3

**ONE OF THE** reasons we're so excited about *Fallout 4* is because of how great its predecessor was. *Fallout*'s wastelands are full of competing factions with different goals and you are given the option to decide which of those goals to help with and how to do so. This might be a world that has been destroyed, then, but you feel as if you are given the agency to decide how to shape a new, perhaps better, world, depending on the decisions you make.



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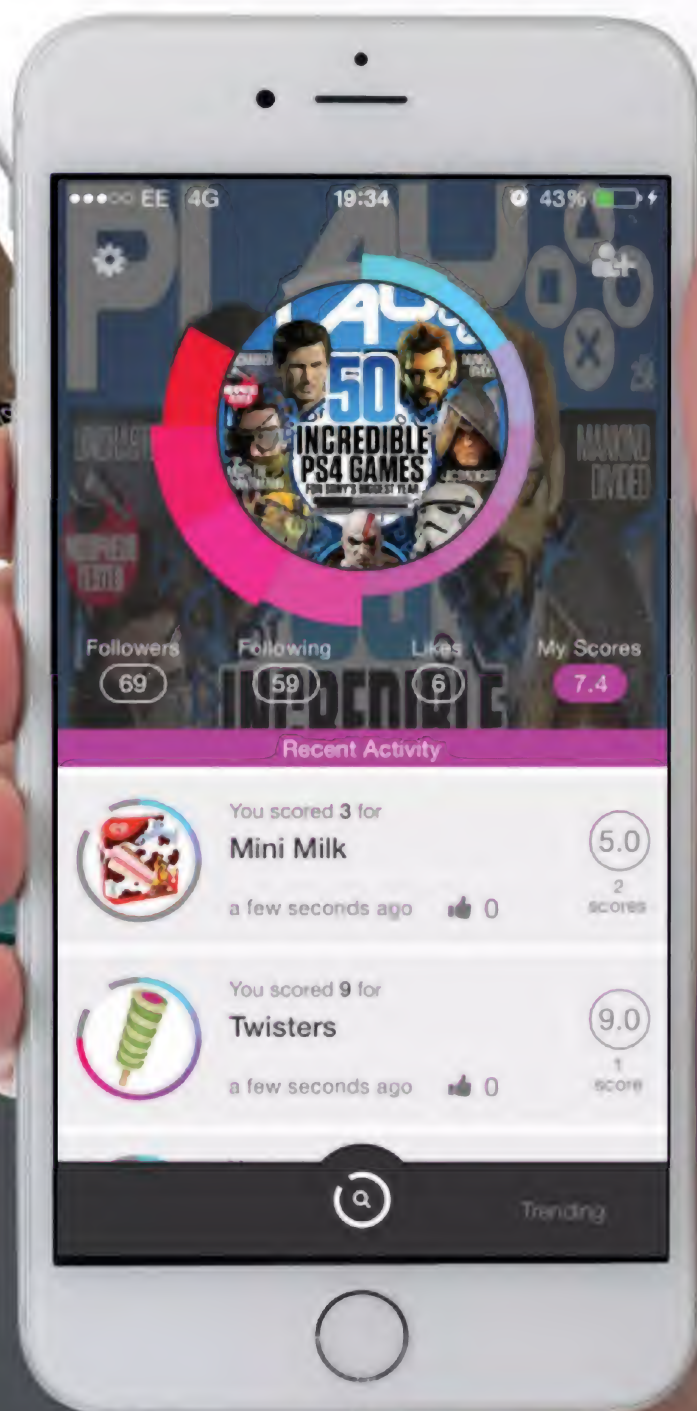
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network app



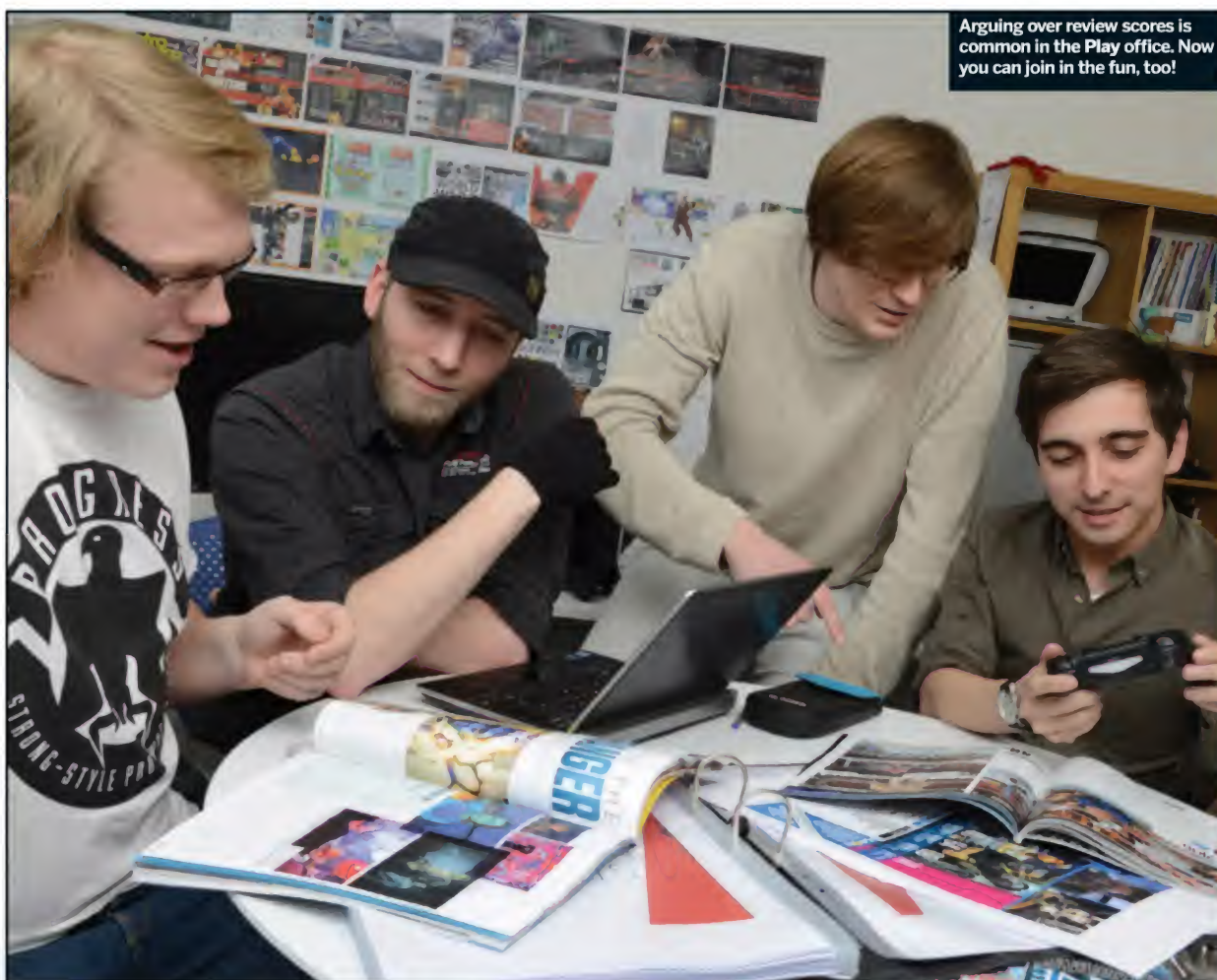
*L. Alb*  
**Luke Albigés**  
Editor

As much as we love to wax lyrical about the latest PS4 releases, it's long been the case that a lot of players deal purely in numbers. If you're part of this new, connected, no-nonsense generation, you'll love Just A Score – the new social scoring app we'll be using to dish out ratings from now on. You can follow us, see trending topics, check our scores and even share your own opinions on anything you like. Don't miss out on the fun – get involved today!



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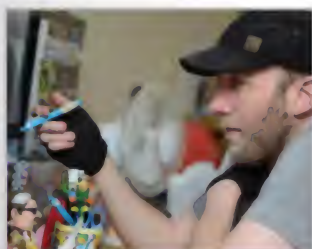




Arguing over review scores is common in the Play office. Now you can join in the fun, too!

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## PLAY PICK OF THE SCORES...



### Stay cool this summer

Ice cream is pretty awesome, but not all frozen treats are created equal. Since so many people (at least two) have asked which are best, here are a few of our tips...

10 PlayMag\_UK scored 10 for White Magnum

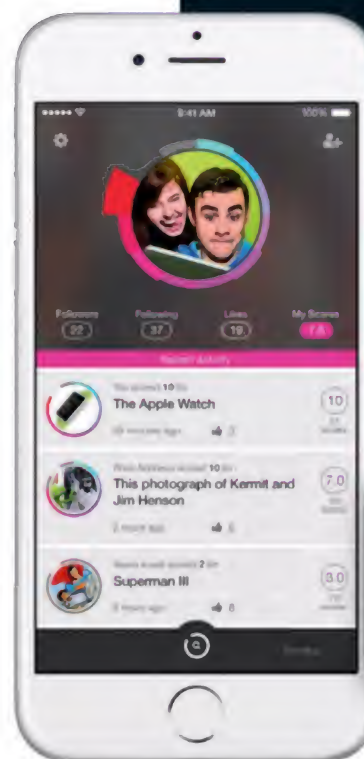
9 PlayMag\_UK scored 9 for Feast

9 PlayMag\_UK scored 9 for Twister

7 PlayMag\_UK scored 7 for Cornetto

3 PlayMag\_UK scored 3 for Mini Milk

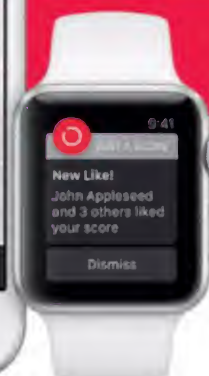
2 PlayMag\_UK scored 2 for Choc Ice



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# Batman: Arkham Knight

Very good, Master Wayne



## DETAILS

**PUBLISHER**  
Warner Bros.

**DEVELOPER**  
Rocksteady

**PSN PRICE**  
£49.99

**PLAYERS**  
1

**INSTALL SIZE**  
48.7 GB

**AGE RATING**  
15

**TWITTER**  
@BatmanArkham

**Trophies** 65

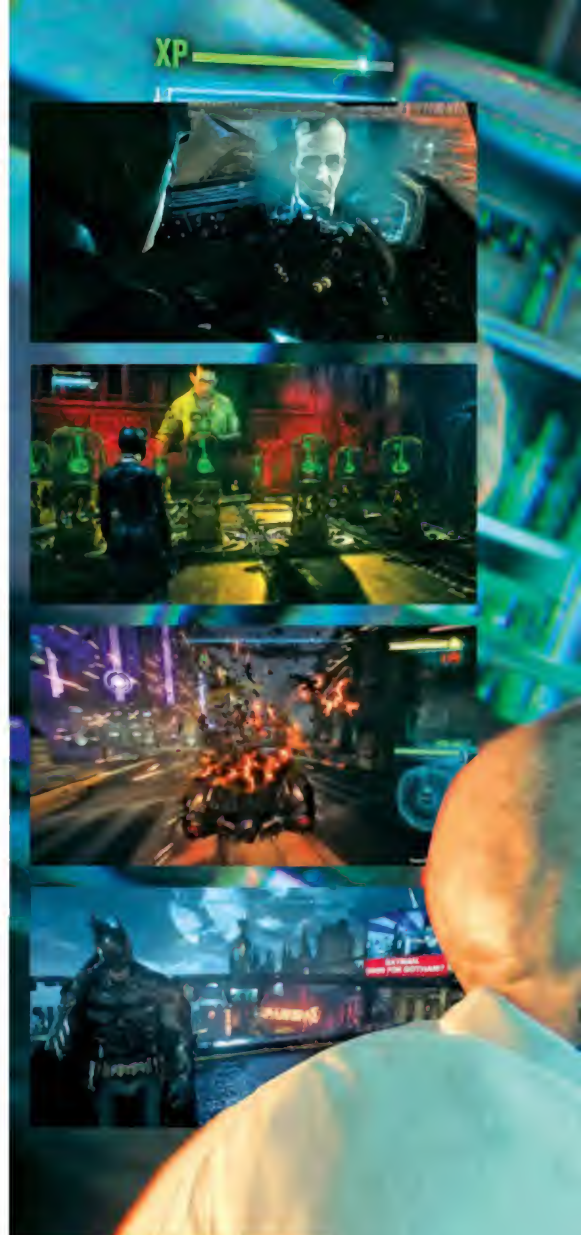


**IT MUST BE** quite frustrating for Rocksteady that the primary shortcoming of its trilogy-closing Batventure comes not from anything that the team has or hasn't done, rather from what happened while the team was locked away in the Batcave building its magnum opus. The amount of games that have cribbed from the *Arkham* series since Rocksteady first hit the big time is ridiculous and even though Batman was there first in a lot of cases, there's still a degree of fatigue to some of the played-out systems at work here. All credit to the team, then, for still finding ways to make these mechanics interesting, both by adding new tools to the existing pool and by finding new gimmicks with which to frame the much-copied combat system.

Chief among these is clearly the Batmobile and although it was the top bullet point in pretty much every piece of pre-release chatter, its billing was justified. There are only a few occasions where the car feels shoehorned in or overused and the rest of the time, it's just another tool to use as you see fit. Calling in the Batmobile as you're coming down from a glide to land straight in the driver's seat and screech off is satisfying every time, as is using its ejector seat to quickly

and easily take in the Gotham skyline. It's even used in puzzles and combat, its influence permeating every aspect of the game without damaging any of them. Its inclusion is akin to the ship in *Black Flag* – it offers a welcome change of pace as well as new gameplay, particularly important when everything else on show is simply an evolution of what has come before.

While the story missions do tend to play up the vehicular combat angle, there's more than enough variety to *Arkham Knight* as long as you're willing to go find it. The world is peppered with so many distractions that it can be tough to work out what to tackle next, but each chain of missions offers its own style of gameplay. Rushing through story content and complaining that there's too much Batmobile is like loading up on cola bottles at the pick-'n'-mix counter then whining that you've only got cola bottles – the choice is yours as to what kind of content you want at any given time and it quickly becomes clear that each strand has its own theme. Riddler missions are where the brain-teasers are at, while military checkpoints and rescue missions offer combat puzzles and stealth challenges. If you don't mind the idea of even more car stuff, two side mission chains are set up to test you in each of the Batmobile's mobility



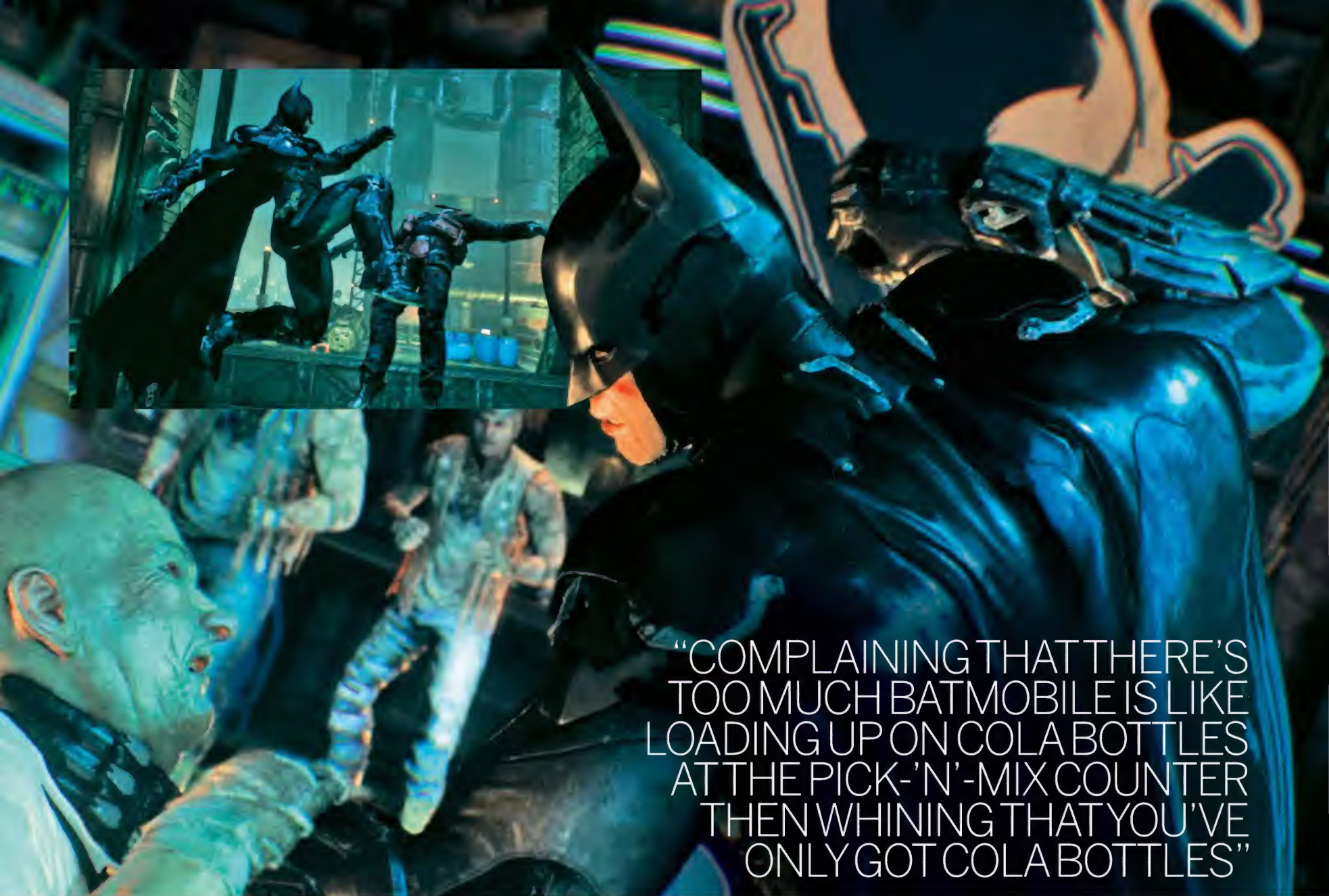
△○×□ Penguin (or Cobblepot as Batman insists on calling him) puts in an appearance, and he is still a cockney-talking ass.

modes, and each helps to get a better feel for and understanding of the vehicle's handling. Each villain's quest line also feels distinct, whether leaning towards combat, investigation or exploration. Any complaints about repetitive gameplay in *Arkham Knight* can be pinned purely on the player, basically – there's never a shortage of things to do and even just exploring the city and listening in on radio chatter can open up new distractions.

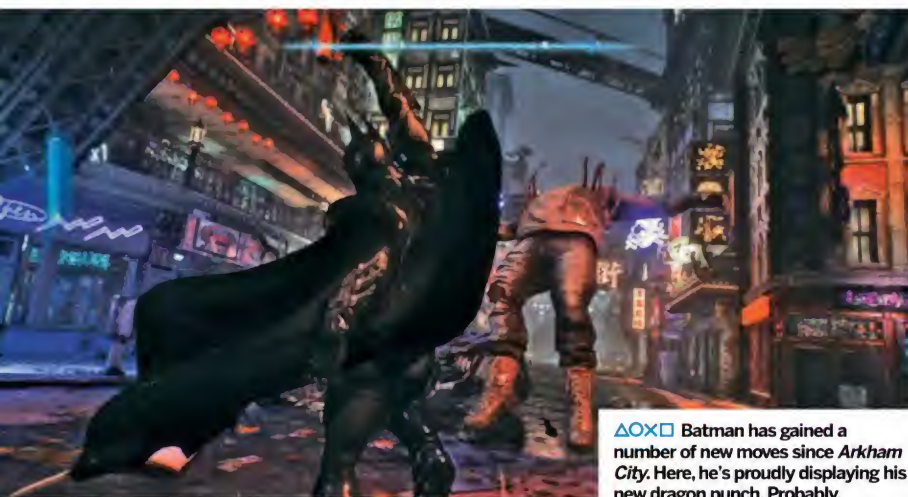
This variety is key to *Arkham Knight*'s success and is evident in just about every aspect of gameplay. There's a degree of assumed knowledge with many returning systems – tool tips don't introduce using gadgets in combat until you encounter an enemy type vulnerable to one of them, so those not overly familiar with previous games or keen to experiment might think the combat opens up a little too slowly. Far from it – your arsenal from the start is impressive, with a few new gadgets thrown into the mix as the game goes on to help spice things up. With so many toys and a lot of later enemies weak to a specific one, it must be said that the targeting system isn't quite up to the







“COMPLAINING THAT THERE’S TOO MUCH BATMOBILE IS LIKE LOADING UP ON COLA BOTTLES AT THE PICK-’N’-MIX COUNTER THEN WHINING THAT YOU’VE ONLY GOT COLA BOTTLES”



△×□ Batman has gained a number of new moves since *Arkham City*. Here, he’s proudly displaying his new dragon punch. Probably.

task of picking out the right target every time and losing your flow in combat and taking damage as a result of grappling the wrong guy can be little frustrating, but it’s only an issue when enemies are clustered together.

Just as with the variety of missions, combat runs as deep as you want it to. Most early encounters can be scraped through with barely a thought to what you’re doing but as you start to bring in timed attacks, takedowns, mobility options, gadgets and environmental hazards (it’s okay – jamming a guy’s head into a fuse box *definitely* doesn’t kill him), every encounter feels that much more rewarding. This only becomes more impressive when fighting alongside a partner character, where playing well lets you use the awesome team attacks more often, and you definitely want that. Unsurprisingly, what Rocksteady presents here is the finest version of the much-aped combat system it premiered in *Arkham Asylum*, a fluid fighting engine that offers simplicity and depth in perfect measures and is all wrapped up in a presentation that is still best in class.

Production values are through the roof – Rocksteady has squeezed more out of the PS4 than most of Sony’s first-party teams and *Arkham Knight* is the best argument for leaving PS3 behind. Cross-gen development often holds back the new-gen version, so to see what can be achieved with focus to the current console makes us want to see developers move away from PS3. A graphical marvel, diverse gameplay, clever narrative twists and turns, tight combat, a huge world, plenty of new mechanics... Rocksteady has truly delivered. If your chief issue as a developer is that people are copying your combat system because it’s *too good*, you’re probably doing pretty darn well.

Luke Albigés

## VERDICT

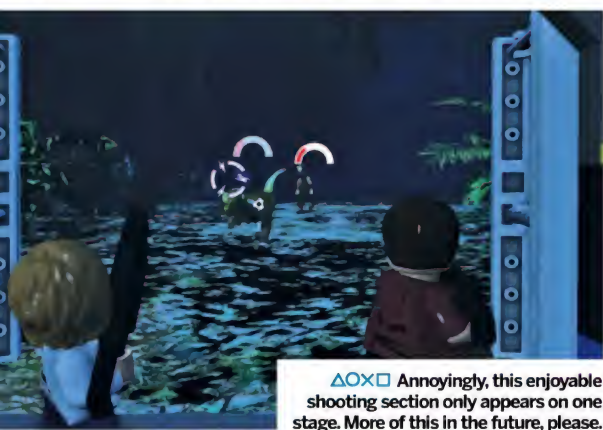
A stunning closer to Rocksteady’s trilogy that improves on everything that made the other games so good. Play it, love it and look forward to what the team moves onto next.



PlayMag\_UK scored 9 for Batman: Arkham Knight

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# Lego Jurassic World

That is one big pile of bricks



**IT'S ALWAYS NICE** when you play innovative videogames that break the mould. Sadly, TT Games' latest offering doesn't break the mould in any way whatsoever, but it does manage to bend it in some rather interesting directions.

## DETAILS

**PUBLISHER**  
Warner Bros.

**DEVELOPER**  
TT Games

**PSN PRICE**  
£44.99

**PLAYERS**  
1-2

**INSTALL SIZE**  
13GB

**AGE RATING**  
7+

**TWITTER**  
@LEGOJurassic

**Trophies** 50



Unsurprisingly, the biggest changes to the tried and tested *Lego* template that has generated TT Games millions of pounds revolves around the game's biggest draw – the dinosaurs. Some of the most enjoyable moments of *Lego Jurassic World* arrive when you're controlling these mighty beasts, and there's something immensely satisfying about controlling the T-Rex and smashing your way through the delightful game world as you send hundreds of studs flying in all directions. While there are 20 dinos to unlock, many of them share the same attributes, allowing them to climb walls, smash through blocks or stamp the ground to break it open. They're typically used to solve basic puzzles during the game and you'll have to heal the dinosaur first in order to gain its trust.

A large number of chase sequences have also been added over previous games, typically taking the form of *Crash Bandicoot*-esque into-the-screen sections. While they're fun, they're also over far too quickly. Thankfully, you can return to them at any time once a stage is completed. Sadly, the most exciting prospect of having dinosaurs in a *Lego* game – the battles – also prove to be the biggest disappointment. While the need to scramble around to find distractions as the dinos battle in the background is fun, the actual QTE-based scraps are basic and about as challenging as breathing. Sure, it's a game for kids, but it wouldn't have hurt TT Games to make them at least a little more interactive.

The rest of the game is exactly what you'd expect from a *Lego* title, with characters having access to a variety of useful skills that will enable them to navigate the game's 20 stages. One thing we must mention is that while the skills don't add a great deal to those seen in previous games, they match the characters extremely well. Alan Grant uses a raptor claw to cut through ropes and dense thickets, many of the kids





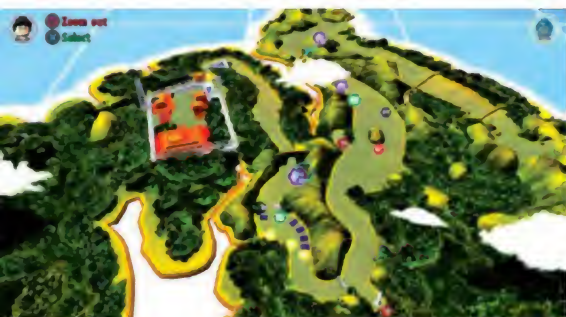
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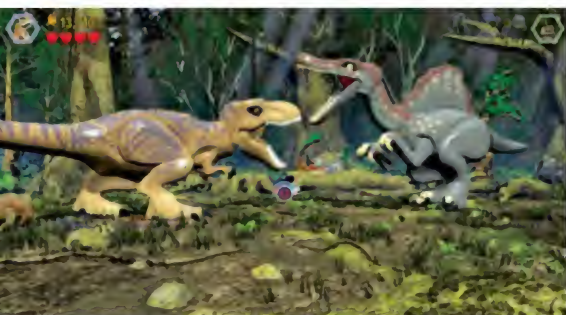
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## “THE ACTUAL QTE-BASED DINOSAUR SCRAPS ARE BASIC AND ABOUT AS CHALLENGING AS BREATHING”



△○×□ This is a handy new ability: distract dinosaurs by taking amusing photos of them.



### WENT AND MADE A NEW DINOSAUR

This is easy. Simply go to the lab in Jurassic Park or Jurassic World and have a fiddle.



### CLEVER GOAL

Have a game of football in the petting zoo of Jurassic World and score a goal with the Velociraptor.

can either sneak around in camouflage or use their screams to shatter glass, while mathematician Ian Malcolm uses his ridiculous brain to solve sliding block puzzles. The likes of Ellie Sattler and new boy Owen Grady can even dive into dino poo to find useful items. It's all themed exceptionally well and while a few of the skills now fall a little flat – the X-Ray vision last seen in *Batman 3* simply needs to be turned on to work – they all integrate well during play.

This solid integration is mainly down to the fact that TT Games has put a fair bit of thought into the structure of each stage, and while some of them feel a little too short – almost as if the game was rushed to meet its launch date – they do generally feel far more cohesive than those found in *Lego Batman 3*. This is particularly apparent with the *Jurassic World* levels, which not only feel bigger in scope, but also tend to be more varied. It's all stuff we've seen before in *Lego* games, but it's done well, constantly rewarding you with well-placed studs and plenty of replay opportunities.

The hub world of *Lego Jurassic World* is also a decent size. It's not quite on par with *Lego Marvel's*, but, split across two islands, it's full of things to do and is structured in such a way that you won't tire of exploring it. Although you can sail through all 20 levels in under ten hours, you'll typically finish with a rating of around 25 per cent, meaning there's still plenty to discover once the story is finished. Terrorising dinos as the T-Rex, racing around in gyrospheres and creating your own dinosaurs are just a few of the fun things to discover, further adding to the game's longevity.

*Lego Jurassic World* may not break the mould and it's not the most robust game – we experienced several annoying bugs, including one that caused a complete restart of the final level – but it is a lot of fun, and ultimately, that's all that really matters.

Darran Jones

## VERDICT

The dinosaurs and the *Jurassic* setting are a fun and welcome addition to the series, but it is still very much *Lego*-by-numbers and it feels like the franchise does need a rethink.



PlayMag\_UK scored 7 for  
Lego Jurassic World

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE





# Ultra Street Fighter IV

Don't worry, it actually works now



## DETAILS

**PUBLISHER**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER**  
Other Ocean

**PSN PRICE**  
£19.99

**PLAYERS**  
1-2

**AGE RATING**  
15+

**TWITTER**  
@Capcom\_UK

**Trophies** 50



**YOU HAD ONE** job, Other Ocean. One damn job. All Capcom and Sony wanted you to do was to port the

definitive version of *Street Fighter IV* to PS4 which, considering there was a perfectly good PC version to use as a starting point, really shouldn't have been this difficult. Still, launch day came and fans began noticing issues within minutes. Menus were sluggish, input lag was awful, visuals were actually worse than the PS3 version in places and even gameplay was a mess – Decapre's teleport was too slow, Guile's Sonic Boom was invisible, combos would inexplicably fail to connect, animations would glitch out completely... it was awful. The patch announcement came quickly, but not before event organisers had already allayed fears about competitive play and ditched the PS4 port in favour of the 360 version. The damage was already done in terms of Sony's potential exposure on the pro circuit but fortunately, prompt patching

has helped (and is still helping) cement this port as the definitive version it should have been in the first place.

Now, several patches later, only a handful of bugs remain. At the time of writing, there are a couple of situational combos that still inexplicably drop where they should once have connected but aside from those, the dodgy audio mix is the worst offender. Incidental background sound effects are about ten times louder than they should be, making the explosions in Seth's lab or the tumbling barrels in the brewery unwelcome loud surprises. It's strange that seemingly the easiest fix of the lot has been left until last but then again, we suppose addressing input lag and game-breaking glitches would have needed to be something of a priority. We're still a patch or two away from perfection but if you were putting off getting this due to all the horrible reports around launch, you can at least jump in now safe in the knowledge that on a gameplay level, *Ultra Street Fighter IV* is as good as ever.

Issues aside, you have to hand it to the team behind the game for dealing with a lot of the complaints about the original console release of *USFIV*. New challengers finally have Trials to help players learn their links and combos, for instance, plus costumes are all on-disc and available from the start rather than being DLC. There are even some cool new additions for veterans to play around with – Edition Select returns from the PS3 version, allowing you to use any variant of any character from *SFIV*'s storied history but there's a brand new option in there now as well. Omega mode adds new moves and properties for every character to make them way more powerful, almost to the point where certain characters feel more like their *Marvel Vs. Capcom* counterparts than the *SF* originals. Ryu and others get WAY easier link timing, Gen can use magic chains (*Darkstalkers* combos, basically) and EX stance change for daft combos, many regular EX specials are replaced with canned mini-supers





△×□ Many PS3 arcade sticks are supported, but you'll need a DualShock 4 hooked up as well.



and pretty much everyone has crazy damage potential in this mode. It's limited to offline games and Player Matches, thankfully, so you don't need to worry about stumbling across beast mode versions of characters when you're trying to up your ranking.

**"IF YOU WERE PUTTING OFF GETTING THIS DUE TO ALL THE HORRIBLE REPORTS AROUND LAUNCH, YOU CAN JUMP IN SAFELY NOW"**

We've been spoiled with so many great fighters since we last saw *Ultra*, though, that it's getting harder and harder to be impressed with this aging fighter. *Guilty Gear*'s stunning visuals and technical gameplay blew us away, *Mortal Kombat X* is the series at its very best and even a glimpse of the future

has made this a little less appealing – recent hands-on time with *Street Fighter V* means we're more interested in seeing who's next to join the roster and just how far we can push the system than replaying match-ups we were playing almost a decade ago. Maybe the *SFV*

beta will actually help in this regard, getting people hyped for the series and leaving them little choice but to bust out *Ultra* in the downtime between beta schedules ahead of launch next year.

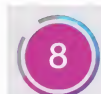
While the current trend for games releasing in unfinished states is not something we want to condone or celebrate, that Capcom and Sony were able to clean up Other Ocean's mess so efficiently is impressive and the result is a fighter that, despite being over seven years old at its core, is still

great fun to play. Hopefully, tournament organisers going back to the last-gen version of the game based on how poor this was at launch will fire a few shots at publishers keen to hit deadlines rather than standards – Sony will miss out on a lot of exposure thanks to this bungled port, and that's money going straight into other companies' pockets. As great as the game is now, we'll never forget the tragicomedy of the day one version. If you're only jumping in now, praise Blanka you didn't have to see what we saw and enjoy one of the best traditional fighters out there. You lucky sods.

**Luke Albigés**

## VERDICT

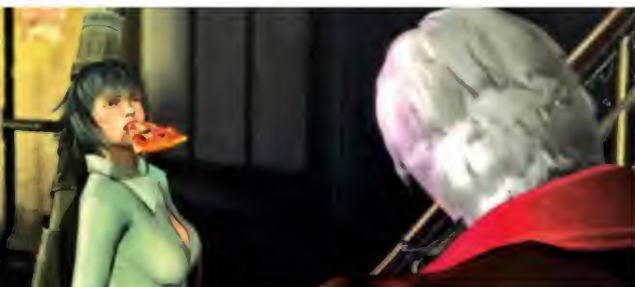
Now that it's been patched several times, *Ultra* is every bit as good as *SFIV* has always been. Pretty much the perfect way to get ready to rise up in the upcoming *Street Fighter V*.



PlayMag\_UK scored 8 for *Ultra Street Fighter IV*

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**





**ΔOX□** The cutscenes are still rather stylish, but the sharp HD upscale has made some of the old graphics come out badly – we miss those soft edges on the flame effects and such.



**ΔOX□** We've never felt as badass in any character action game as we do when we play Vergil. He's just so suave.

# Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition

You cooled off yet, kid?



## THE MOST NOTABLE

upgrade to this package isn't the 60 FPS framerate, or the 1080p resolution,

or even the 20 per cent speed boost the game is given with its Turbo Mode. No, the best additions here are the characters – Vergil, Trish and Lady are all playable. The remastered package is as good as we

mechanics and the sluggishness of the non-Turbo gameplay. You can mitigate the speed concern in the options menu, granted, but the camera makes trudging through the less-than-stellar story of the game a real chore.

Once you unlock Bloody Palace (complete the game once on any difficulty) the game really begins to show

## DETAILS

### PUBLISHER

Capcom

### DEVELOPER

In-house

### PSN PRICE

£19.99

### PLAYERS

1

### INSTALL SIZE

20.45 GB

### AGE RATING

16+

### TWITTER

@DevilMayCry

### Trophies 42



1 4 6 31

“ADDING VERGIL, TRISH AND LADY INTO THE MIX HAS BASICALLY CREATED A WHOLE NEW GAME”

you what it can do: for old times' sake, we played through the new Legendary Dark Knight mode as Nero/Dante first time around, unlocking Bloody Palace for Vergil, Trish and Lady as a reward. That's where we started to take note of this re-release: adding these three into the mix has basically created a whole new game.

Trish handles like the cheekiest fighting game zoning character – fling your huge sword at enemies for crowd control, then let rip with your bare fists in a barrage of drive-modified electric attacks. Trish is a much more technical fighter than Nero, for example. With all the range-play she requires to perfect, she's got a steep learning curve, but once you've nailed her tricky combos, you can waltz through the Bloody Palace with ease.

Lady – who favours range to melee – is a total curveball compared to anything seasoned *Devil May Cry* players are used to: she sacrifices all the mobility of the





ΔOX Lady and Trish's playthrough makes the levels a little bit more entertaining, if only because you've got to really think about Lady's spacing *all the time*.



other characters in favour of insanely powerful missile blasts and AoE salvos. This makes boss fights a daunting new challenge, but the payoff when you hit SSS rank just for landing one perfect hit on a crowd of enemies is worth it.

Finally, there's Vergil – the fan-favourite. He's got a 'motivation gauge' that makes the traditional *DMCD*-through-SSS stylish ranks *matter*: the more the gauge fills, the better moves he can pull off, and the more damage he can inflict. What's better is that you can fill the motivation gauge simply by being a badass – attacks, dodges and projectiles fill the gauge as you'd expect, but Capcom has managed to make doing anything slightly badass fill the gauge, too. Walk towards enemies slowly, taunt them at *just* the right time, parry an attack, sheathe your blade after a clean kill... it'll all add to that badass gauge, and it feels *amazing*.


So, for every addition the game has made to the PS3 classic, there are some unfortunate drawbacks, too. The game still feels incomplete, in all

honesty – the fact you play through the same levels backwards and forwards, again and again, hasn't done its aging camera and UI any favours, but the new character action mechanics that have been added more than make up for any shortcomings. With this and *DmC* both remastered for PS4, it seems like Capcom could be experimenting, weighing up sales of both to see where to take the franchise next. We don't mind that; if it was a truly updated, cleaner and sexier version of what's on show here, we know the future of the franchise would be in safe hands after all.

Dom Peppiatt

## VERDICT

**An old game that's still beautiful underneath, despite its aging skin. Play it for the awesome boss fights, not the story, and you will have an absolutely great time.**

 PlayMag\_UK scored 8 for Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition  
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE




## PLAY CHALLENGE



## SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...




### THAT BLOODY PALACE...

 **THERE'S A TROPHY** for clearing the Palace with all characters at 'S' Rank. If you can do that, you're a true hero.



### DOWNLOADABLE DISCONTENT

 **OH, AND YOU'VE** got to finish the game without the 'shortcut' DLC. Well, that's fine; we didn't want pay for Orbs anyway.

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag\_UK!





PUBLISHER 989 STUDIOS | DEVELOPER EIDETIC | FORMAT PSONE

RELEASE DATE 9 JULY 1999 | PLAY SCORE 93% | METACRITIC SCORE 90/100

# The Making Of... SYPHON FILTER

From a disastrous platformer to setting the standard for future action games: Ed Smith unearths how one PlayStation studio survived failure, near-cancellation and Hideo Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid* to deliver a ground-breaking third-person shooter



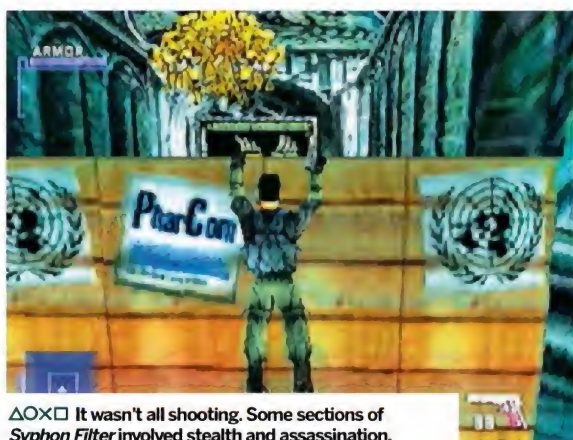
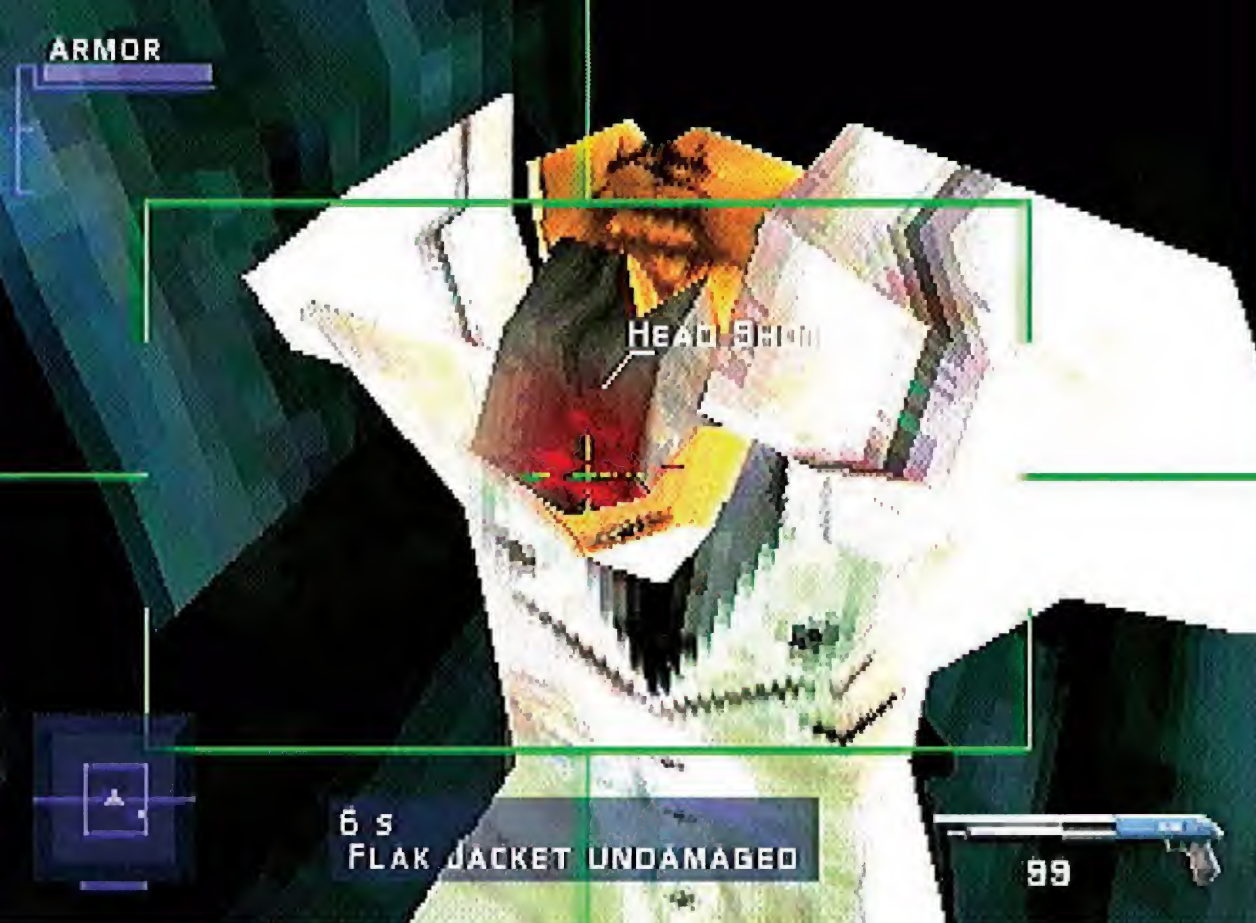
He didn't know it, but this was one of the most important meetings in Richard Ham's career. It was going well – the publishers seemed to like this new demo – but Eidetic was hanging by a thread, its reputation still in the gutter thanks to *Bubsy 3D*. Pre-production on the studio's new game, *Siphon Filter*, was now way behind schedule. If this demo didn't absolutely shine, 989 Studios was ready to pull the funding. Ham had no idea the stakes were so high.

"I'd flown down to San Francisco to give this demonstration to 989, but I was only told a few days afterwards that the meeting would have made or broken our chances of completing the project. We were coming off the back of *Bubsy 3D*, which has now gone down in history as one of the worst 3D platformers of all time. That had been a hit to our morale. It meant we had something to prove."

Overshadowed by *Mario 64*, which had launched five months prior, *Bubsy 3D* had looked like the end of Eidetic. If only to show themselves that they could do better, the studio built a test level for a potential *Bubsy 2*, essentially killing time before the studio doors were shuttered for good. It was never supposed to go anywhere, but Sony saw promise in the *Bubsy* engine, and made Eidetic an offer.

"Sony had an internal pitch for a game which was set in a far-flung, *Final Fantasy*-style universe," explains Ham. "It was set in a world where Mother Nature had started fighting back against humans, and you were some kind of special person born with the ability to filter 'syphon', this in-game energy, Gaia – life-force kind of stuff – from the Earth. Sony gave us that pitch and after *Bubsy* we were like 'please,





△×□ It wasn't all shooting. Some sections of *Syphon Filter* involved stealth and assassination.



yeah, we'll sign anything.' But then we went back and we thought we didn't really like that concept."

Ham, a big fan of Hong Kong cinema, wanted somehow to get the bloody, balletic gunfights of a John Woo movie into a videogame. He'd also recently played *Tomb Raider*, and had been fascinated with how it handled third-person shooting. His proposition for *Syphon Filter* was to combine those two, and create a fast-paced action game. But with Eidetic now signed on to produce a futuristic RPG, Ham's ideas were a tricky sell.

"WE WERE COMING OFF THE BACK OF BUBSY 3D WHICH HAS GONE DOWN AS ONE OF THE WORST GAMES OF ALL TIME"

"It was an odd proposition at the time, a game with no sci-fi or fantasy elements, something set in the real world. There were people saying, 'Okay, but could you have a level set on a satellite? No one's going to want to play something in the real world with real guns.' Kelly Flock, president at 989, was a big cheerleader for us, defending it by explaining

that no-one else was doing what we were doing. But still, we were stuck with the name."

Total development time on *Syphon Filter* was around two years, from 1996 to 1998. Half of that was spent on pre-production. Aside from *Tomb Raider*, and a title from Delphine Software called *Fade To Black*, third-person shooters didn't exist on the PSone. Ham and Eidetic's programming team had a lot of technical work to get on with.

"The epitome of shooters for a long time was *Doom*," explains Ham, "where you were being attacked by bunches of guys all at once. But then with *Quake* and the move to true 3D shooters, that changed because of tech limitations and you were being attacked

by only two, maybe three guys. Our stated goal for *Syphon Filter* was to get back to that *Doom* feel.

"We had to use a lot of smoke and mirrors: NPCs activating and deactivating when they were off-screen, areas loading in and out as you played. You'll notice how between a lot of the big areas in *Syphon Filter* we make you run through a building,

## BLUFFER'S GUIDE

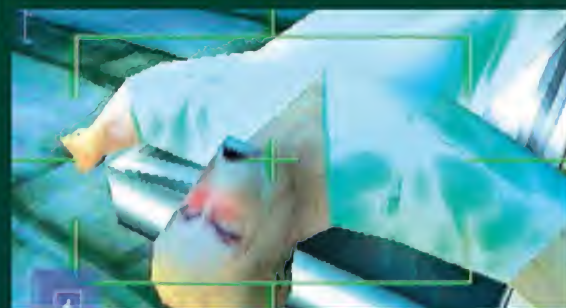
Everything you need to know in five facts



**1** It's a third-person shooter, heavily influenced by John Woo movies and *Tomb Raider*.



**2** It helped popularise the lock-on function which would later be used in series like *GTA*.



**3** It was developed by Eidetic, which is known for *Bubsy 3D*, one of the worst games of all time.



**4** It was originally pitched as a fantasy RPG before going through a complete overhaul.



**5** It was almost cancelled and was expected to be overshadowed by *Metal Gear Solid*.





△○×□ The lock-on aim button was one of *Syphon Filter*'s biggest innovations.



## FURTHER READING



### OLDER – TOMB RAIDER

Core Design's classic 1996 action game provided the inspiration for a lot of *Syphon Filter*'s mechanics, specifically the third-person aiming and shooting.



### NEWER – SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

*Syphon Filter*'s first (and last) outing on PS2, introduced online multiplayer, with mixed results. The franchise then moved to PSP.

## STANDOUT MOMENT



## SHOCK HORROR!

Some men just want to watch other men burn. Despite its technical prowess, *Syphon Filter* is best remembered for its taser. Implemented as a backup weapon for if players ran out of bullets, it provided one of PlayStation's most sadistic death scenes.

"For the longest time you'd fire it and the guy would be instantly knocked out," explains Richard Ham. "But that wasn't very satisfying. So we thought we should let people hold it down for a while. But then we realised that we had to signal somehow when it was safe to let the button go, so that's why we made the guys smoke – when you saw them smoke, you knew they were dead. And then, as a gag, it was a simple trick for us to change the smoke particle effect into a fire effect, and that meant you could just fry people."

or through a winding corridor. That was to slow you down while the next area loaded in."

By the standards of 1999, *Syphon Filter*'s enemy AI was remarkable. Bad guys ducked, rolled out of the way of bullets and moved into different positions to flank the player. But even that was down to technical sleight of hand. Ham spent weeks creating the illusion of thinking, independent enemies.

"The enemies had no concept of the physical dimensions of levels at all," Ham explains. "We put in thousands of navigation nodes and connected lines between them. All the bad guys knew was how far away from Gabe they were supposed to be, and then they could either run closer or further from Gabe, going along these strings to the next node. So, guys who looked like they were coming over a fence were actually just following these lines that we laid out. When they landed, there were hundreds of little dots to determine where they go. And then we could say, 'This node here. If they go to this one, give them a 50/50 chance that they will duck, or roll.' That made it seem like they were dynamic."

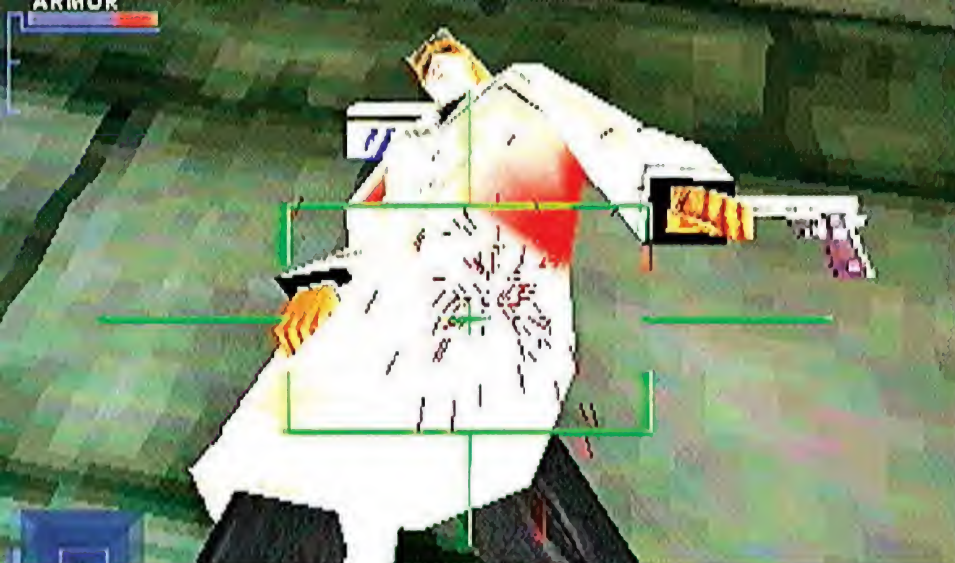
Whilst implementing these navigation nodes, *Syphon Filter*'s levels were still being built. Ham and the programmers had to

contend with hundreds of bugs – without any understanding of the dimensions of levels, enemies would just run to the next node, clipping through walls and textures as they went. It's why a lot of levels, like the opening subway section, are broken up into multiple parts. Getting enemies to behave properly, across three floors of nodes, was impossible.

And then came *Syphon Filter*'s aiming and camera systems. *Fade To Black* had been a slow, clunky game. *Tomb Raider* had built on the formula, but was nowhere near as smooth as Ham would have wanted. Especially back when the DualShock controller hadn't rolled out, iterating *Syphon Filter*'s third-person mechanics took a lot of work.

"Nobody knew about analogue sticks and camera controls at the time," explains Ham, "but when I played the original *Tomb Raider*, I was blown away by how much they missed a trick. All you had to do was get the guys on screen, basically, and she would automatically aim her arms at them and you would shoot. It was brilliant, but what was missing was I didn't have any control over it. At the same time, I didn't want the camera to be locked on your back all the time – I wanted it to swoop and tilt, like when you're shooting at a guy who's above





“WE ALL SHRIVELLED UP AND DIED THAT DAY. WE ALL THOUGHT WE WERE DOOMED”

you. That's what got me stoked about the lock-on button. But it's not like it snapped into existence. That subway and streets level, the first level we worked on, went through hell. We spent over a year working out how to spawn the enemies, and configuring the buttons.”

Given a lemon of a title, writer John Garvin had made lemonade, using ‘Syphon Filter’ as the codename for a virus, and spinning the rest of the game’s storyline from there. As Kelly Flock had championed, this was something different, something no one else was doing. But in 1997, disaster struck. Just as *Mario 64* had obliterated *Bubsy*, a newly revealed Japanese spy thriller, called *Metal Gear Solid*, was set to ruin *Syphon Filter*.

“We all shrivelled up and died that day,” says Ham. “We thought we were doomed. It was so far ahead of its time in terms of presentation. And the similarities. We had an Asian woman who supported you via the radio. So did *Metal Gear*. We had a fight with a big, slow guy with a big gun. So did *Metal Gear*. We had a fight with a helicopter. So did *Metal Gear*!”

Armed with insider information, Eidetic went back and changed some of the details

in *Syphon Filter*. Gabe Logan’s sidekick, who communicated via the radio, was originally called Mei Jing, but of course, that was now too close to *Metal Gear Solid*’s Mei Ling. So, she became Lian Xing. Then there was the boss fight with Anton Girdeaux. Originally armed with a Gatling Gun, in the released version he sported a flamethrower, ducking comparisons to *Metal Gear Solid*’s Vulcan Raven.

It was a worrying period in *Syphon Filter*’s development, but still the game was something unique. “On *Syphon Filter* it was gameplay first, presentation second,” explains Ham. “*Metal Gear* was the opposite. It kept the camera far way that you only had to see two-poly walls. And you’d never notice any texture warping. Plus you had these big *Pac-Man* levels containing maybe three guys. We were bringing in maybe 30 or 40.”

Despite the looming threats of both *Metal Gear Solid* and impatient execs, *Syphon Filter* made it through development and launched in January 1999. Reviews were extremely positive – “a lot of people held up their hands and said ‘we were wrong about this one,’” explains Ham – and Eidetic finally had the hit

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AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS & SUPERMARKETS, OR ONLINE AT [WWW.IMAGINESHOP.CO.UK](http://WWW.IMAGINESHOP.CO.UK)



## BUDGET CINEMATICS

Though it’s fairly plot-heavy for a game from 1999, all of *Syphon Filter*’s cutscenes were penned by writer John Garvin, over a single weekend. Originally conceived as something much more cinematic, limited time and budget forced the Eidetic team to be economical with cutscenes, which is why most of *Syphon Filter*’s cinematics feature only one or two characters, cloaked in shadow, standing inside easy-to-render rooms and corridors. Sequences like these were a product of *Syphon Filter*’s limitations, but they helped add to the conspiratorial, *X-Files*-esque tone of the game.

it had desperately worked for. But Ham, after working on *Syphon Filter 3*, decided to leave Eidetic to work on Lionhead’s *Fable* series.

“*Syphon Filter 3* was originally a launch title for PlayStation 2, and I was so in love with *Diablo* at that point that I wanted to do it as an online shooter. But Sony basically said ‘there are still a lot of PSones out there. If we do another *Syphon Filter*, it will sell on the PSone.’ So, that’s why *Syphon Filter 3* is kind of an odd game, a weird collection of flashbacks, because we were trying to rework our original design, of doing a level here and a level there, into something easily thrown together. After that I decided I was done.”

Three more *Syphon Filter* games followed, culminating in *Logan’s Shadow*, a 2007 game for the PSP. Ham would later move to Splash Damage to serve as creative director on *Brink*. He now runs a YouTube channel, ‘Rahdo’, dedicated to board games.

“I’d like to go back but it’s never the same,” he concludes. “That was a different time. We were a small enough team that everyone had to pitch in. It was backbreaking work. But then, triple-A videogame production always is.”





## INTERVIEW

# THE BRITISH POST-APOCALYPSE

The Chinese Room's creative director, Dan Pinchbeck, talks to us about Everybody's Gone To The Rapture's unique take on the end of the world

**Can you tell us about the setting of the game and why you choose it? It's kind of weird to see the English countryside in a videogame!**

It's partially that, really! When we talked about making a game about the end of the world, it got us thinking we want to make something that has an authenticity to it, a truth to it. It felt like a really unusual place to set it. Somewhere that you could really think that you knew. For us, growing up in a village like this in the Eighties, we really did feel like we know this place and we understand how these places work. The way this game is going to work is if we create a valley that people really care about with characters that they really feel like they know or have met and the more we can draw on our own experience of that, the more likely we are to succeed in it.

Setting it in the Eighties was quite a deliberate thing in terms of going into the heart of Cold War paranoia, but also you don't have mobiles or the internet, so it's entirely possible for a small rural

community to be utterly cut off from the world. That gets interesting because, actually, in those small communities, the valley that you live in is the world. It's this whole play between the world ending and this little village that is worried that the trains have stopped running, rather than the fact that something awful has happened in this big

**"I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY GUNNED DOWN A BUNCH OF SUPER MUTANTS WITH A SHOTGUN..."**

abstract 'out there'. It just all naturally seemed to fall into place as the right choice.

**If you grew up in a place like this then we guess that's going to make it feel more like a real place to people if it's somewhere you knew?**

Yeah. We took a look of inspiration from British science fiction like the works of John Wyndham,

John Christopher, *The Day Of The Triffids*, you know, stuff like that, and I think those stories really worked as stories because it was this playoff between stuff. Like in *Day Of The Triffids* you've got man-eating plants walking down the streets, but he's writing about little villages up on the South Downs and you go, 'oh, I know Beck's Hill.' We had this early bit of concept writing we did – and it's not a nuclear holocaust game – where we had this pensioner who is worried because her sheets were getting dirty with the fallout and that's so kind of English that it just felt right.

**It's kind of that juxtaposition between the mundane and the epic...**

Yeah, absolutely. Hopefully that makes you care more because I've never actually gunned down a bunch of super mutants with a shotgun, but I have had moments where the car won't start and I've been in a complete panic to get somewhere, so I can relate in that really deep way. It felt like it was



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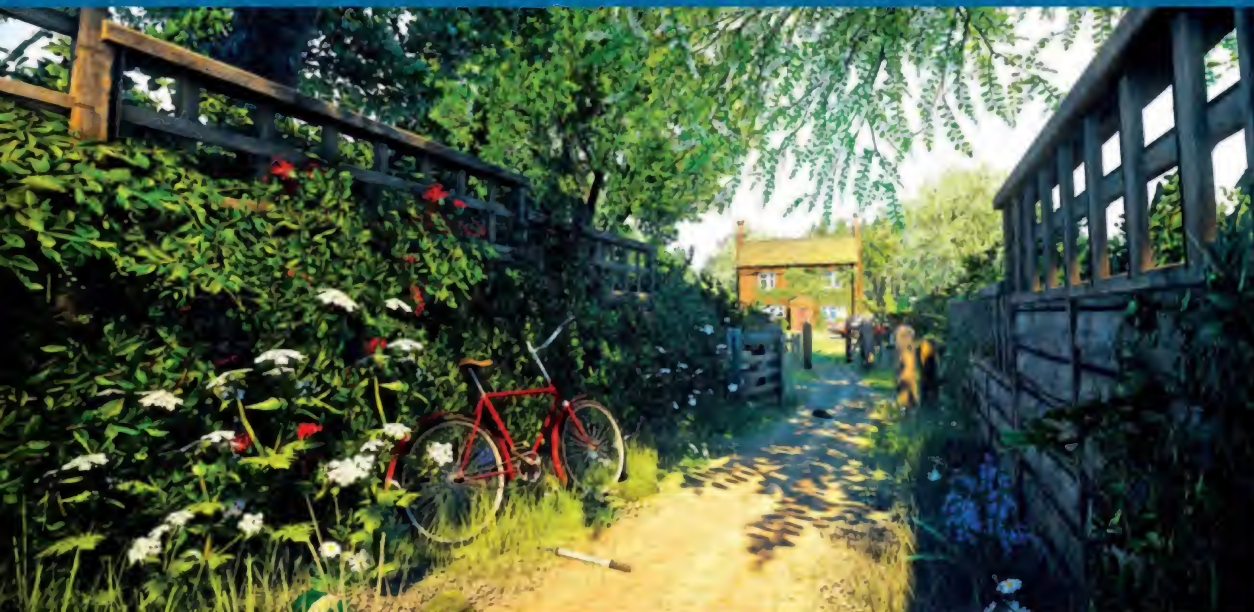
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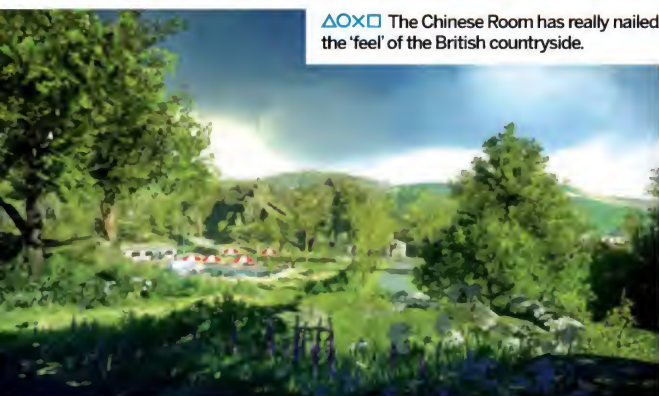
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ΔOX□ We can't wait to wander off into a thicket and just take in the visuals...



ΔOX□ The Chinese Room has really nailed the 'feel' of the British countryside.



a way we could get people really close to caring about the drama around them because they relate really easily to what everyone else is going through around them in that situation.

**It's quite an accessible game in that you're walking around and listening to people talk and you don't need a high level of skill to do that; is that a conscious decision?**

It sort of panned out that way. The biggest thing for us is, if it's a game about the story, we don't want to put loads of blocks in between you and

the story. With the tilt events that were in there originally, we had them with a whole range of different difficulty levels. Some of them three dimensional tilts, some of them two, so you would have to work harder to get at the story behind them. We got a lot of people to play it and we found that very quickly, people just wanted to get at the story and it felt like it made sense in saying, if we make a lot of things physically difficult to access, that means that if you actually just really want to engage and immerse yourself in the world, you're having to do all this stuff that takes

you out of it. So, if we keep it simple and keep everything flowing, then it's about the experience of being in it and that's what the payoff is.

What's important to us about it is it's not a conveyor belt where story is just dropping in front of you. It's up to you, the player, to actually go out and look for it and discover it. So, you're still working – you're just not having to work your fingers. I think that makes it accessible to a more casual audience, but there should be enough depth in the game so that hardcore players can really sink their teeth into it.



# THE WITCHER ADVENTURE GAME

PUBLISHER FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES | PRICE £39.99 | PLAYERS 2-4

PLAYTIME 2-3 HOURS | COMPLEXITY MID/HIGH

Done with Wild Hunt yet? Of course you're not – nobody is. Still, if you want to mix things up a bit to save burning yourself out with the stunning RPG, this tabletop take on the format might be just the thing...

■ **GIVEN THAT MANY** early videogame RPGs cribbed directly from the *Dungeons & Dragons* tabletop dice system, it's not really all that surprising that board games are just as capable of taking videogames and making them work in a physical dice-and-card-based format. There's not a D20 in sight here, though – *The Witcher Adventure Game* uses custom dice for each character, as well as a small pool of communal battle dice. Symbols represent attack power, defence and special traits, with results able to be manipulated by each character's unique set of powers to swing the outcome in your favour.

The goal is simple – be the player with the highest score after one hero has turned in three quest cards. Scoring is similar to *Ticket To Ride* (more points for longer, trickier lines), plus bonuses can be earned by completing side-quests and even assisting others in their missions. Don't assume that means that this is a co-op game, though. While not

directly competitive, each hero is out in search of personal glory and although you can't duel one another, it's perfectly possible to run interference by fiddling with scores and placing enemies and hazards between other heroes and their destinations.

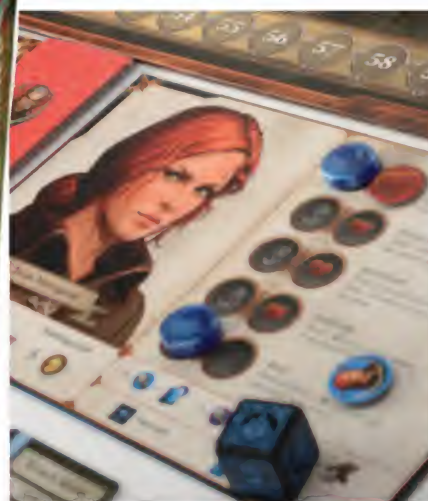
The balance of trying to clear quests while also grabbing as many Victory Points as possible en route makes for an extremely interesting and enjoyable adventure and one that gets pretty tense in the closing stages – should you rush to end the game by clearing your last mission, or mop up additional duties in the hope that the score bonuses will slightly push your score out enough put you on top when another player ends the game? Faithful to the subject matter, varied and replayable thanks to the inclusion of multiple unique characters and a great way to spend an evening with a few friends, *The Witcher Adventure Game* comes very highly recommended to all.



## GERALT

■ **IF YOU'RE LOOKING** to get into fights, Geralt's your guy. He gets three extra dice to use in combat and by using Develop to draw new Signs and gear, he can modify his pool of dice to make encounters even more manageable. His quests offer lots of powerful foes to overcome and unlike the others, he'll come away from a mission battered and bruised and need to take a turn or two to recover.





## TRISS

■ **AS YOU MIGHT** expect, Triss is more attuned to all things magic than the rest of the cast. While she starts relatively weak, she can draw a host of powerful spells as the game goes on and is capable of powering them all up for later use in just a single turn. She's not as immediate as Geralt so you need to be more thoughtful in building her up. But once you hit the lategame, there's nothing she can't do.



## DANDELION

■ **WHILE HE'S NOT** much of a fighter, Dandelion can talk his way out of sticky situations. If you don't like to be short on gold, this guy is your play – by using Sing, he's able to grab extra coin thanks to his many tales. His quests are made up of political and espionage missions, meaning there's not all that much combat to be done outside of dealing with the beasts and bandits that lurk in the wilds.



## YARPEN

■ **GERALT'S DWARVEN PAL** is a tricky bugger. The reason for this is that he's able to draw from either Geralt or Dandelion's quests – it's hard to know how best to develop when splitting your time between two mission types, plus a knowledge of what quest cards have gone and what lucrative ones remain in the decks will help Yarpén succeed. This little guy is for experts only!





EXTENDED PLAY

## TEKKEN

The Tekken series has a strong history with PlayStation. As we wait for that relationship to continue when Tekken 7 comes to PS4, why not check out the best ways to rekindle your relationship with one of the best fighters out there

“TEKKEN REVOLUTION IS A FREE-TO-PLAY VERSION OF THE SERIES AND IT’S SURPRISINGLY GOOD”

## TEKKEN REVOLUTION

■ IF YOU FANCY yourself some *Tekken*, still have a PS3 knocking about and don't want to spend any money, then Bandai Namco has got you covered. *Tekken Revolution* is a free-to-play version of the series and it's surprisingly good. Sure, we wouldn't say that it's up to the standard of say, *Tekken Tag Tournament 2*, but it's still a solid arcade fighter

that's well worth a shot. It also has some decent ideas in terms of how it deals with its free-to-play nature. You need to spend coins to play and have to wait for these to regenerate over time before you play again. However, if you fork out some cash to actually buy coins instead, you won't lose that currency so long as you keep on winning your matches.





## TEKKEN CARD TOURNAMENT

■ **NOW AVAILABLE ON** iOS and Android, *Tekken Card Tournament* is a cool little *Tekken*-themed card battler where the cards you play are visualised in fights played out on-screen. Microtransactions mean that a bit of pay-to-win creeps in, but there's no reason you can't have fun and be competitive without forking out any cash. If you're *really* into your card battlers, or find yourself particularly taken with the mobile version of the game, you can actually buy a physical version of *Tekken Card Tournament* too. The mobile version will do for us, but it's cool to see that option there.



## STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN

■ **BEING AS IT'S** developed by Capcom, *Street Fighter X Tekken* is mechanically more similar to *Street Fighter* than it is *Tekken* (though *Tekken* players will find some similarities in there). That's no bad thing in our book, even if you're a *Tekken* fan. It's cool to see *Tekken* characters in a different context, battling

iconic characters from another classic series and offering you a different way to play with characters you already know. And who knows? You may even find that getting a taste of *Street Fighter* will give you a gateway into a whole new world of fighting, just in time for PS4 exclusive *Street Fighter V*.



## TEKKEN ON THE GO

■ **IF YOU FANCY** getting some *Tekken* in while you are out and about, there are a couple of ways you can do that on your Vita. Your first two options are *Street Fighter X Tekken* and *Tekken 6*, which are available

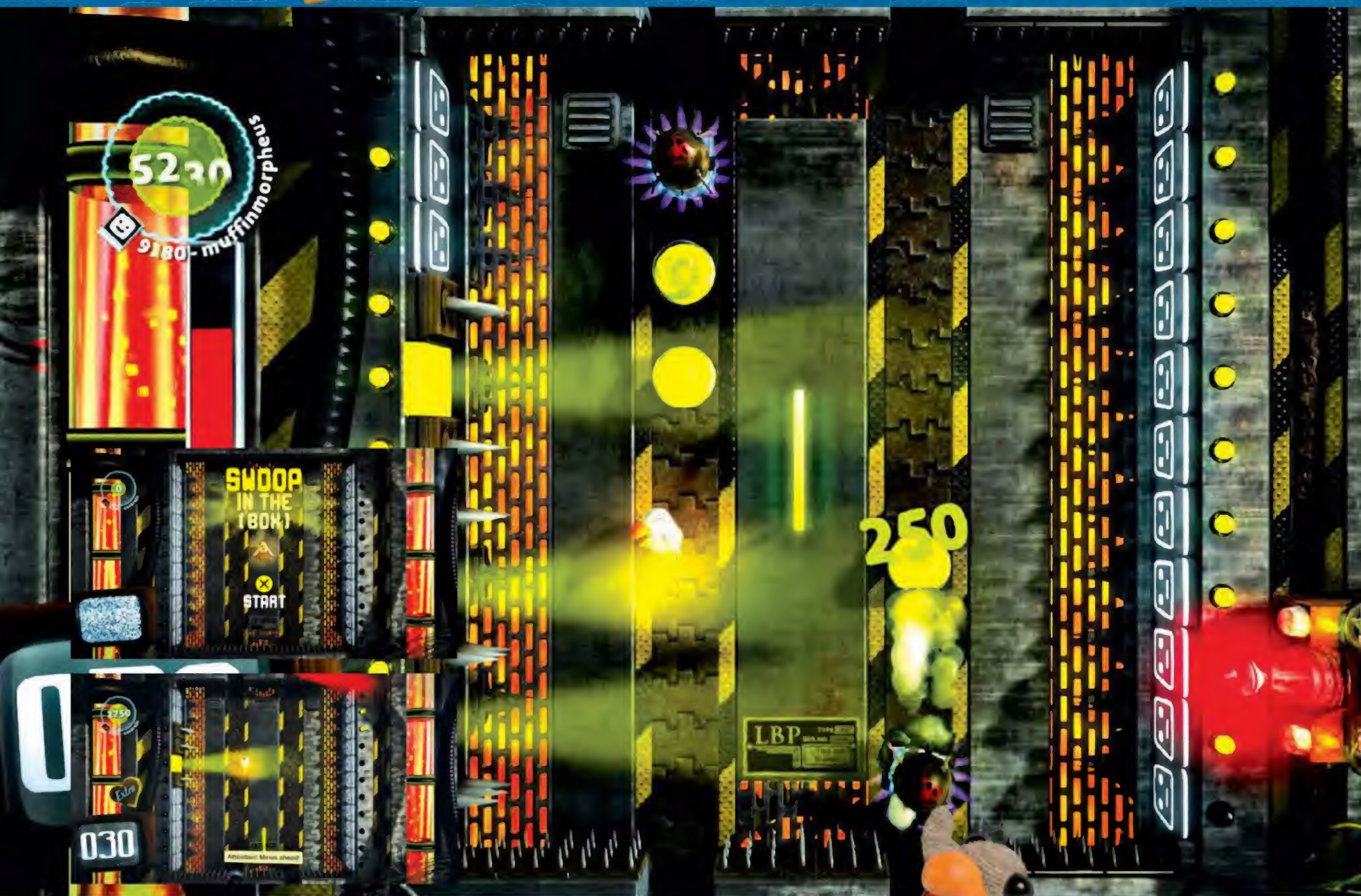
on the PlayStation Store. If you fancy going back to old-school *Tekken*, however, then you can grab the original *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*, both of which are available as part of the excellent PlayStation Classics range.



## THE MOVIE

■ **LET'S GET SOMETHING** clear from the start. We're not offering up the *Tekken* film as an option because we think it's any good. When even the creator of *Tekken*, Katsuhiro Harada, can't find anything nice to say about it, you know it's not good. The reason we're suggesting you *may* want to give the *Tekken* film a watch is because of the fact that it's so impossibly awful. In other words, avoid.





## MASTERCLASS

# LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

Introducing an addictive challenge level that features everybody's favourite fabric bird, Swoop

**TIME TAKEN TO MAKE:** One week **NUMBER OF PLAYS:** 10,806 **TIMES HEARTED:** 428

■ **WHILE ANY GAMER** can enjoy *LittleBigPlanet* for a number of reasons, its real success comes in the wide variety of gameplay you can get from community creations. Whether it's complex RPGs, intricate horror levels or the plethora of unique platformers, there are so many options to choose from here. Swoop In The Box is an excellent 'challenge' level – the sort of stage that tasks you with seeing how long you can last before whatever peril you're pit against finally overcomes you. Here, the concept is simple: as Swoop, bounce from wall

to wall avoiding the spikes that randomly appear, earning more points the longer you can survive.

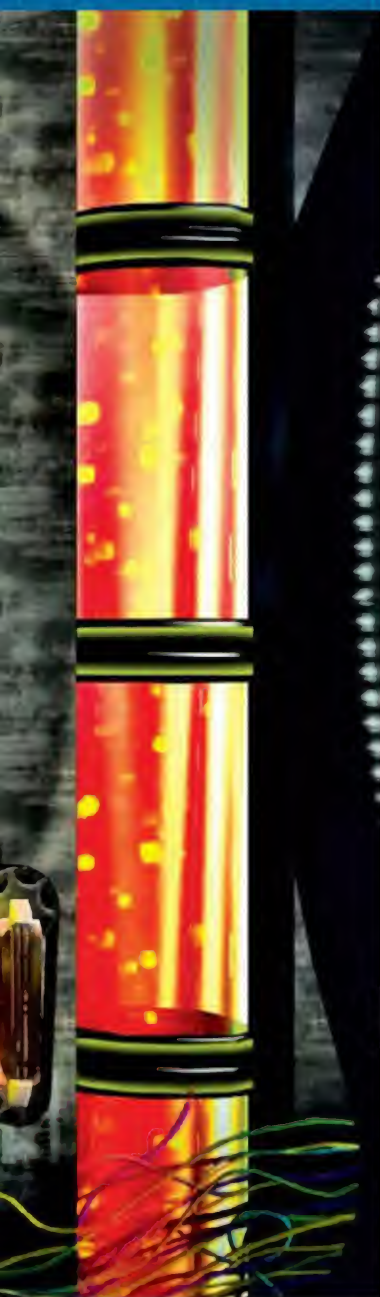
As is demanded of such levels, however, it only stays easy for so long. Initially you're free to ricochet off almost the whole wall, but it isn't long before more and more spikes are added until you're given very few places you can safely touch. It plays well on Swoop's inherent flying abilities, meaning there's a good deal of strategy involved with deciding where you can bounce; Swoop can't reach the top of the box in the space of a single bound so you need to

aim for the best position that will give you optimal chance for success regardless of the next set of spikes that appear. These dangers reset as and when you hit a bounce pad, too, meaning you'll need sharp reactions if you want to earn a high score.

But that's not all. Not content with making it increasingly tricky to find a safe bounce pad, Swoop In The Box creator Dragonfly2500 wanted to add in a whole other bunch of features to make it a really exciting game to play. Take, for example, the yellow rings that appear in the centre of the box; collect





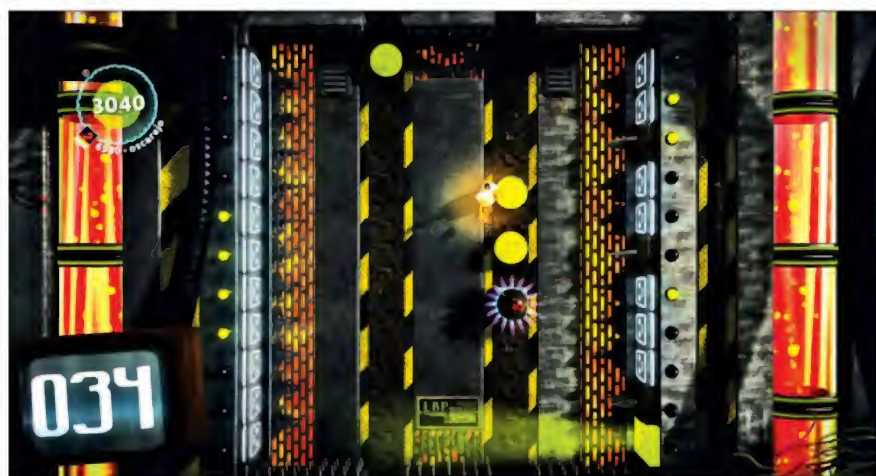
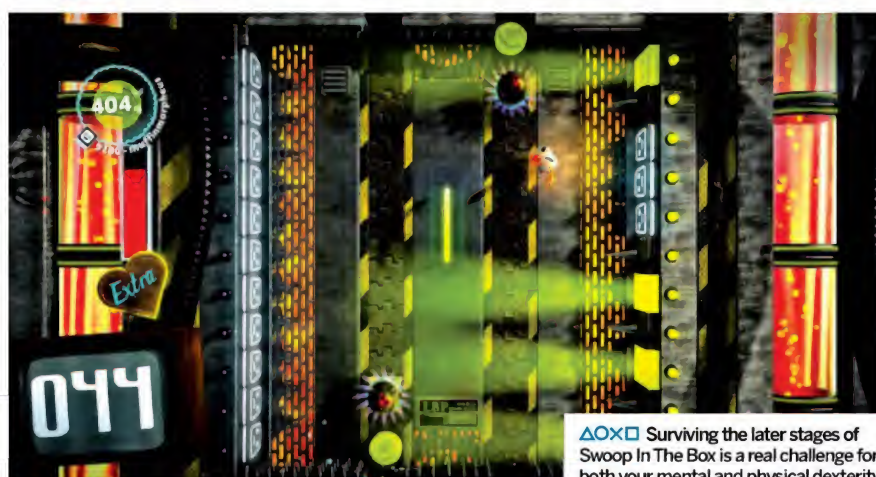
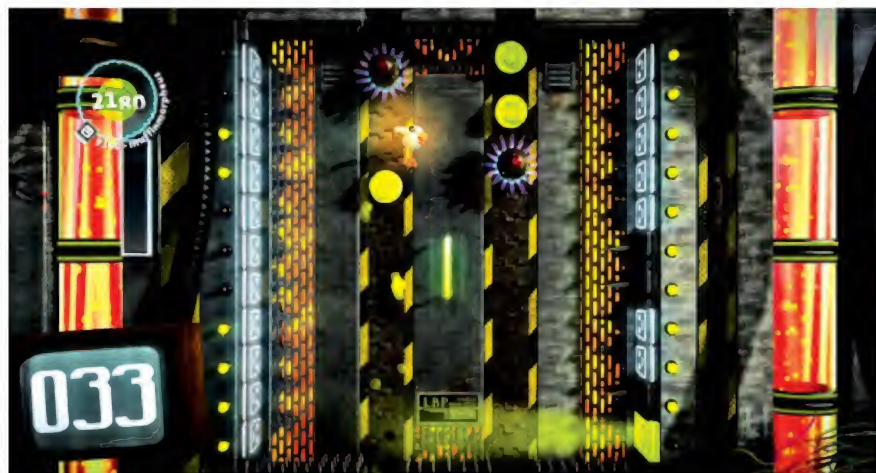


ΔOX□ There are so many different ways to score points in this level. It constantly gives you something to think about.

these and you'll fill a bar on the left-hand side of the screen. Fill it fast enough (it quickly drops, so you'll need to collect them with practically every bounce) and you'll earn a special ability that, when activated, will let you fly in a straight line for a brief period of time. It's a reward for playing well, one that can make surviving the harder, later portions of the stage a little easier. It doesn't last long, but it's enough to hit that one bounce pad in the middle of a long set of spikes. There are other additions, too, such as extra lives, highlighted pads that award extra points, and little lights that activate once a pad is struck to score big once a whole wall of lights have been hit. The longer you last, too, the more hazards are thrown into the mix, from bombs that slowly fall or rise in the middle area of the box to lasers that

burst out horizontally from the walls. That last one sounds unfair and in truth it will catch you off-guard more often than not, but there's enough of a visual warning that it can usually be avoided.

All this makes for a stage that constantly tests you, if not to see how long you can survive then see how many ways you can earn points to score big on the leaderboards. It's a great bit of game design that always gives you something to think about with each new bounce, and therefore feels all the more rewarding when you beat your score. And that's the point, really – it compels you to want to keep playing and trying to better yourself. Swoop In The Box is a combination of simple gameplay, a knack for visual flair and a multitude of considered mechanics to stimulate your mind and your fingers. Give it a go.



## CREATOR CURATOR



DragonFly2500 talks about his level, Swoop In The Box, and how he went about building it

### Were there any particular games or LBP levels that inspired you to make this level?

There is a smartphone app out there called *Don't Touch The Spikes* made by Ketchapp, which inspired me. I had played it for months and I really enjoyed the idea behind the gameplay but it got boring without any other traps than spikes. I decided to recreate that gameplay idea but with additional traps, gameplay mechanics and a lot more visuals.

### How did you go about balancing the difficulty of the random spike hazards in the level?

At the beginning I thought it would be a tough challenge but the solution was a complex system of using randomisers to get the spikes randomised and make it so it's never impossible to get through the spikes.

### What was the hardest part about making this level?

I had this nice gameplay idea but the hardest part of it was the implementation – which combines the traps, point rings, bounce pads and so on – to get smooth gameplay and a tough challenge for players so they can enjoy the level and get frustrated at the same time.

### What's the trick to hooking players to replay a level in order to beat their scores?

When people play Swoop In The Box, they get no introduction or tutorial how the level works, because people in LBP don't read speech bubbles or a lot of text very often. So people play it at least two times because they don't know what to do on the first try. When you combine this situation with an in-game replay option to replay the level easier, I think it's much more absorbing for players. Furthermore, players want to check out all the late-game features and that is why they restart the level so many times.

### What particular feature of LBP3 has been most useful to you in making your level, and why?

One of the few features of LBP3 which was useful for me to create this level, was the character Swoop. I think the base logic would work in LBP2 also but not in the same way as it works in LBP3.

### What are your favourite levels created by other users in LBP so far, and why?

My friend ITARBOY1 is my favorite creator so far because his gameplay ideas related to his great visuals in the levels are absolutely mind-blowing. He creates platformers with a unique style of his own and his levels are unmistakable. My favorite level created by him is called TimeTown. It got the Team Pick within a few hours of publishing and has over 26,000 plays.

### Do you have many other ideas for levels you'd like to create? What's next?

I started creating so many different levels on my moon but I rarely finish them. I often get inspired by other games, movies, apps and so on, then I create the basic gameplay and after that I get a new idea for something else. It is very likely that I will publish more mini-games in the future but at the moment I'm working on an upcoming horror-adventure.



HOW TO...

# MAKE A SEQUEL

Laying down the law on how not to kill your fans' favourite series with a terrible follow-up

■ **SEQUELS ARE DIFFICULT** to get right. Change too much and people complain, but don't change enough and – you guessed it – people complain. Still, there are plenty of good examples out there of how things should be done...



## START AFRESH

■ **ONE OF THE** best ways of avoiding fatigue when it comes to sequels is to follow the model used by the likes of *The Elder Scrolls* and *Far Cry* games. Rather than dragging out the same tale over multiple titles, or trying to find another reason to send the same protagonist out on one more adventure, these games start anew with each entry. It's the RPG mechanics and focus on player choice that gets carried over into each new *Elder Scrolls* game, for example. The setting and story can be new each time, avoiding the need to worry about characters or locations becoming stale.

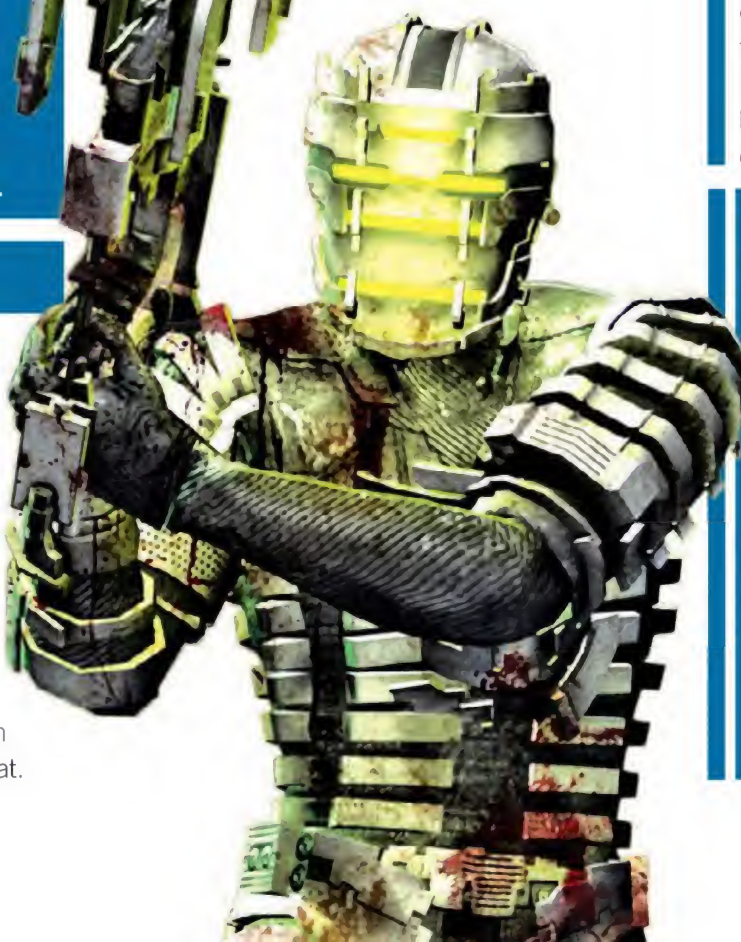


## PUSH THE BOUNDARIES

■ **IT'S IMPORTANT TO** know when there's room in an idea to take it further and when you need to add something to justify making a sequel. Take *Uncharted* – it was a good game, but it was clear that there was more in that formula, which Naughty Dog proved when it delivered a spectacle-filled sequel that refined the format established by the first game. Rocksteady, on the other hand, hit gold first time around with *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. That's why it knew it had to do something new with its next game and decided to relocate to an open world.

## NEVER FORGET

■ **THE ABSOLUTE WORST** thing that a sequel to a great game can do is to forget what made it appealing to people in the first place. If you start trying to copy other games to grab a portion of their audience at the expense of your own, you're likely going to fail by virtue of losing focus on what your game did so well. Take *Dead Space 3* as an example. What do you get when you take a horror series famed for its use of suspense and the way that it made you feel vulnerable and turn it into an action game? A disappointment, that's what.

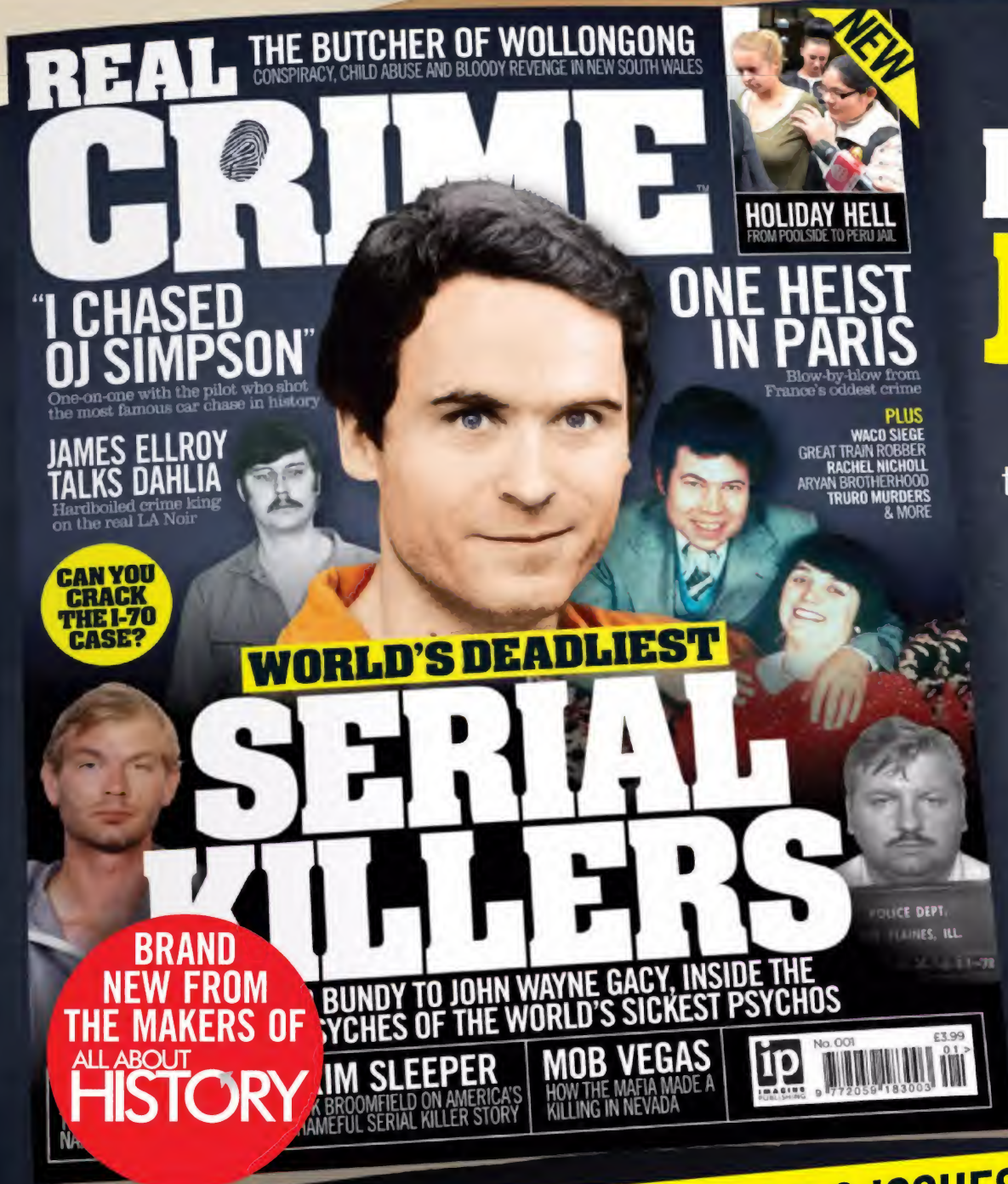


## BIN IT

■ **SOMETIME YOU'VE JUST** got to know when to tear up what you've done and start again. A perfect example of how well that can work is *Red Dead Redemption*. The first game in the series, *Red Dead Revolver*, was an arcade-style third-person shooter that didn't exactly set the world alight. Rockstar kept the western theme in its follow-up, but completely changed the core mechanics of the series as it moved to an open world and let us step into the boots of a brand new protagonist. The result: one of the most critically acclaimed games of all time. Not too shabby, Rockstar...



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## TROPHY GUIDE

## PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

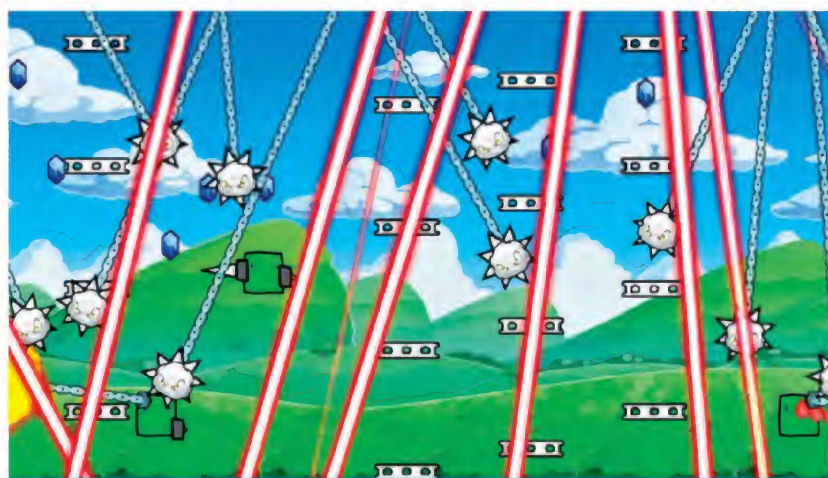
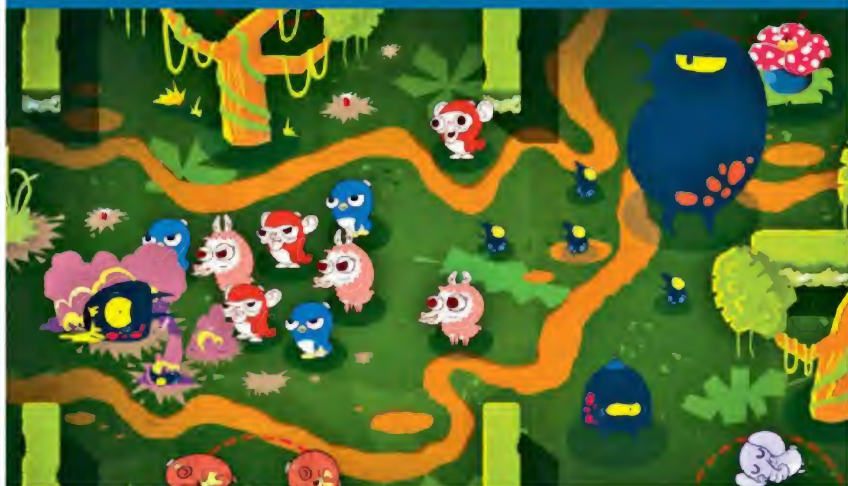


## SUPER EXPLODING ZOO!

PLATFORM: PS4/VITA DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 19 🥉 1 🏆 8 🥈 6 🥉 4

■ **RIGHT, SO STRAIGHT** away, you're going to want to jump in and play levels 1-80 to grab all the standard completion Trophies – this includes three Silver and two Bronze. You'll harvest a ton of stickers doing this, too, which is handy because some of the upcoming challenges will require as much help as possible. Simply completing certain levels in certain ways will net you a tasty *seven* Gold Trophies! While these can be a little irritating – replaying the levels is quite dull – you can't argue with the rewards. The multiplayer Trophies can be boosted using your own account (sign in on both Vita and PS4 and use two controllers or something) and will be the only thing in the way of you scoring a rather easy Platinum.



## CLOUDBERRY KINGDOM

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 16 🥉 0 🏆 0 🥈 5 🥉 11

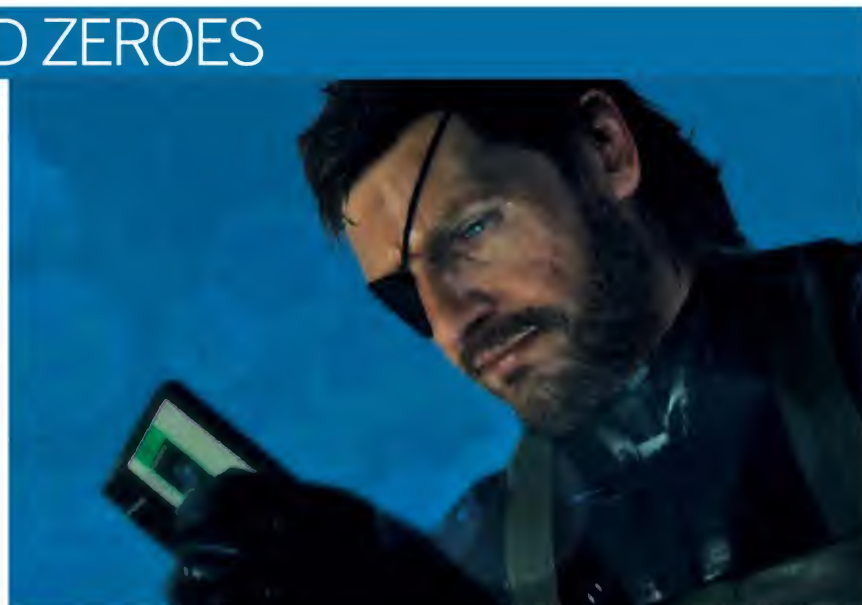
■ **THE FIRST STEP** to collecting *Cloudberry Kingdom*'s scant offering of Trophies is to blast your way through the Story Mode. We advise collecting as many of the gems as possible en route, but don't go out of your way to do so – there can be some cumbersome and repetitive backtracking to get all of them. Just grabbing what you can usually earns you enough currency to grab the necessary power-ups in later levels. Finishing the game nets you six Bronzes and two Silvers, unlocking Arcade Mode in the process. In Arcade, you must complete 500 (!) levels for the 'End Of Infinity' Silver Trophy – but you can rush that a little by constantly changing the different character types and game modes you're playing in. After that, you've simply got to sweep up – 'Cut The Cord' is probably the last that will pop, and that requires three other players and controllers!

## METAL GEAR SOLID V: GROUND ZEROES

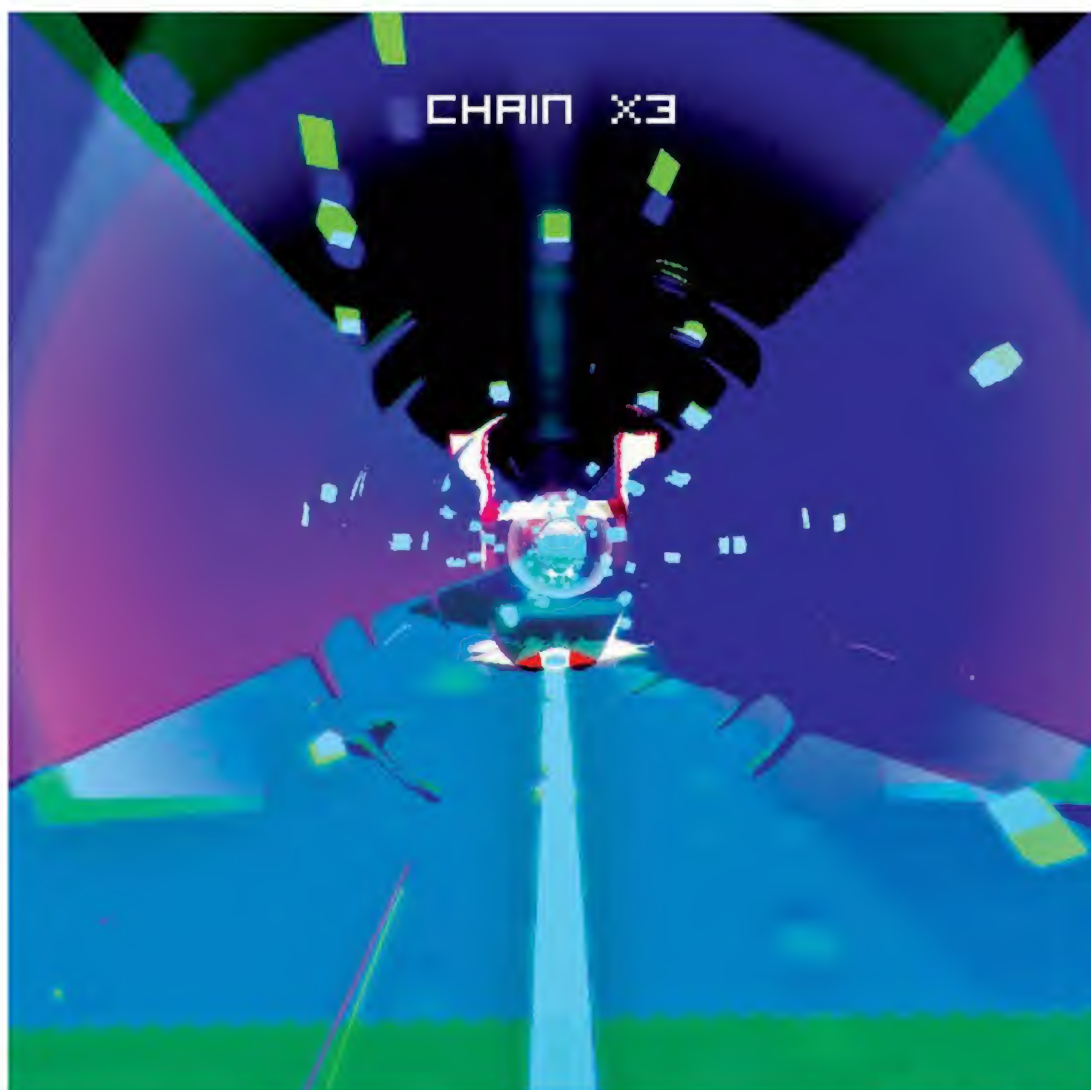
PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 15 🥉 0 🏆 1 🥈 1 🥉 13

■ **IF YOU WANT** to do this the quick way, boot up your first playthrough of the game on Hard mode – all the completion Trophies stack, so this way you'll grab the majority of the game's Bronze awards on the first run (namely 'Reunion', 'Downfall', 'Rescue' and 'Insignia'). We'd advise collecting as many of the XOF patches as you can at this point, as well as extracting the escaped prisoner – it's better done sooner, rather than later. Take care to observe how the enemies behave and respond to you; it'll be important when it comes to tackling the S-Rank missions. Doing each mission on S-Rank gets you the game's only Silver and Gold Trophies ('Skilled' and 'Hero') – once you've got these, you should know your way around the map well enough to clean up the remaining collectibles and side missions, earning yourself the 'Depth', 'Pacifist', 'Infiltration' and 'Extraction' awards for fulfilling various stealth-based criteria. If there's anything left, swoop around the site and clean it up.







## FUTURIDIUM EP DELUXE

**PLATFORM:** PS4/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

**TROPHIES:** 13 0 1 3 9

■ **A REAL SET** of hardcore arcade Trophies awaits you here; this is the most skill-based game in the selection of Plus games this month by a *long* way. You might argue it's not worth it for that one solitary Gold it offers you, but if nothing else, this is a great game to just fire up on your Vita with when you've got a minute or two spare. You'll net four Bronzes and a Silver for tackling the vanilla game,

**"THIS IS THE MOST SKILL-BASED GAME IN THE SELECTION FOR THIS MONTH"**

probably unlocking the 100 cube combo Trophy en route if you're quick at picking this sort of game up. Destroying all the NegaCubes is a little time-consuming and it will definitely require multiple voyages through the many levels, but hey – you'll need to be doing that a *lot* anyway if you want to grab all of the 150 medals the game has to offer so you can get that tease of a solitary Gold Trophy at the end of all that effort.

## CALL OF JUAREZ: GUNSLINGER

**PLATFORM:** PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

**TROPHIES:** 17 0 0 4 13

■ **AGAIN, CHOOSE THE** Hard option for the initial playthrough difficulty. If you'd rather get to grips with the game first, playing on Normal is an option – you have to complete the campaign twice for all the Trophies anyway. The main story is comprised of 14 missions, and you'll want to be using your Concentration ability whenever it's available – there's a reward for spending a whole 15 minutes in that mode. You'll get two Silvers and 11 Bronze rewards upon completion of your first run (provided you went Hard), which will unlock New Game Plus for you. Wrapping it up *again* will get you 'For A Few Skills More'. Finally, you'll need to three-star all the arcade missions to unlock 'The Tally', 'Magnificent Three' and 'Legend Among Legends'.



## SKULLS OF THE SHOGUN: BONE-A-FIDE EDITION

**PLATFORM:** PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5

**TROPHIES:** 19 0 0 2 17

■ **YOU CAN GRAB** all of the Trophies on the first playthrough, but it's less irritating to just accept it'll take you two or three runs to clean up. The first mission doesn't net you any Trophies, but it's easy enough to earn Devil Inside here (just chow down on three skulls and viola!) Now run through the rest of the game, learning the intricacies of its system – 'Out Of Line', 'Victor Of Victorious...', 'Victory', 'Sound Of One Hand Applauding' and 'A Shogun Is You!' should all pop when you complete each set of four levels. A lot of the listed Trophies can be done with an extra DualShock and some bots ('Team Player', 'Speed Kills', 'Were You Using That?' and 'Outfoxing Death'). The rest might take a bit of time online, hence the difficulty rating we've given.



INSTANT GAME  
COLLECTION

# AIRMECH ARENA

Imagine Command & Conquer crossed with Transformers and you start to get a picture of what this free-to-play title from Carbon Games is all about



■ **IF YOU'VE EVER** played *Herzog Zwei* on the Mega Drive, then the easiest way to describe *AirMech Arena* is to say that it's basically the same game. We're guessing most of you aren't that familiar with an obscure Mega Drive game released in 1990, though, so we'll elaborate.

You control a powerful Transformer-like mech that can switch between aerial and ground modes. Rather than taking on your foes on your own, however, the game requires you to build and manage units that will join you on the battlefield. In that sense, the game is a bit like a blend between an RTS and a MOBA, placing a focus on capturing outposts as you push back your enemy to get to their main base and finish them off.

The game's pretty fun, too, and that's without having to fork out cash to speed up unlocking gear. We imagine you're going to hit a point where it gets grindy, but we've had no problems enjoying ourselves in the early stages.

We also like the fact that the game supports co-op, letting you to team up with friends to take on AI or human opponents. Indeed, it's the online portion of the game that's going to bring the most out of it when it comes to developing tactics and strategy, because it's not too difficult to outfox the AI.

Though it's got a lot of familiar elements, *AirMech* blends them in a way that makes it feel different. That certainly makes it worth a shot, especially for free.

## AIRMECH 101

You'll need to get to grips with the best way to use your basic units to get anywhere in *AirMech Arena*...



### SOLDIERS

You need these units to capture outposts, so don't write them off due to their lack of power.



### LONGHORN TANKS

Make sure to take a tank on skirmishes to both dish out and absorb damage.



### TURRETS

These are essential for defence, especially if you boost them by putting them in sockets.



## SHARING



### PLAYSTATION 4 DIRECTORY

Every PS4 owner needs to know what games are worth owning. With over 80 games rated, our Directory is the ideal tool for building your library.



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### UNCHARTED 4



WE TALK ABOUT *Uncharted 4*'s spectacular E3 showing and what it means we can expect when the game hits early next year.

### DISHONORED 2



DISHONORED IS BACK and we couldn't be happier about it. We discuss the game's new setting, powers and, of course, protagonists.

### FALLOUT 4



COMBAT, CRAFTING AND canines – why *Fallout 4* is looking like the best yet.

### DOOM



COULD DOOM REALLY be back to its former glory? We're thinking yes...

### LIFE IS STRANGE



HAS THE SERIES just gone off the rails or is it turning into something amazing?

## twitch LIVE GAMEPLAY STREAMING

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Join the **Play** team for live streaming events and shared gameplay

## TOURNAMENTS!

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch!

The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



### BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT

If you want to watch us play a brilliant game, come join us as we make our way through *Arkham Knight*. Just don't complain if you see any spoilers...



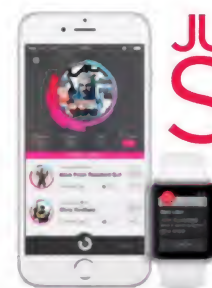
### GOD OF WAR III REMASTERED

We didn't get *God Of War 4*, despite E3 being awesome in every other respect. We'll be reminiscing with this remaster to get our *GOW* fix.



# PLAY+ PLUS PlayList

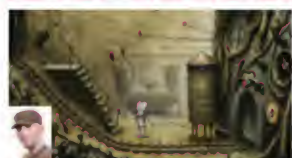
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU



## JUSTA SCORE

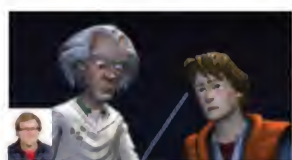
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## LET'S PLAY... ADVENTURE GAMES



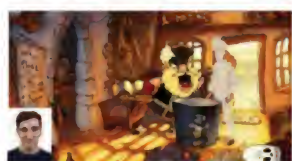
### LUKE ALBIGÉS MACHINARIUM

9 *Unravel* reminded me how much I love Amanita Design's style, and *Machinarium* is one of the team's best. Inventive puzzles, a total lack of dialogue and that beautiful art style all make this an utter joy.



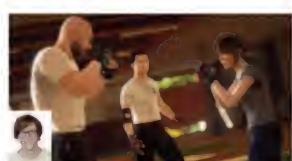
### LIAM WARR BACK TO THE FUTURE

10 To say that the film trilogy is the best ever would be an understatement. I was going to write here regarding my love for the franchise but I got too distracted by humming the theme tune in my head.



### DREW SLEEP THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

9 You can't really go wrong with a game where you captain a ship called the Sea Cucumber, imitate a demonic chicken called El Pollo Diablo and encounter MURRAY THE DEMONIC TALKING SKULL.



### PAUL WALKER-EMIG BEYOND: TWO SOULS

7 I'm not oblivious to the fact that there is plenty wrong with David Cage games, but I still find myself liking them for their idiosyncrasies. Despite it losing its focus towards the end, I'm still a fan of *Beyond*.

## PS4



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An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up. *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

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# THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly  
squeezed among all your  
old favourites

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| Grand Theft Auto V   | 236   | 10    |
|  Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece: the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise. |       |       |
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\*denotes import review

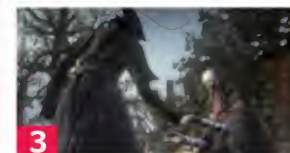
## TOP TEN EXCLUSIVES



### 1 The Last Of Us



### 2 Metal Gear Solid



### 3 Bloodborne



### 4 Uncharted 2



### 5 Shadow Of The Colossus



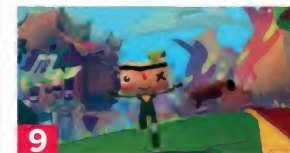
### 6 Journey



### 7 PaRappa The Rapper



### 8 PES 2



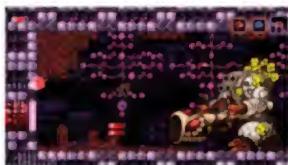
### 9 Tearaway



### 10 Gran Turismo



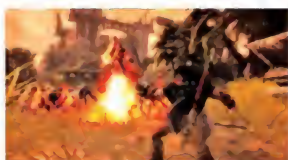
## PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



### METROIDVANIA GAMES

#### PLAY: AXIOM VERGE

Whether you've been a fan of the genre long enough to have played the games that resulted in the 'Metroidvania' portmanteau, or found a love of it more recently, this is another shining example of that style of game.



### MOSH PITS

#### PLAY: BRUTAL LEGEND

Surely there's no greater love letter to everything heavy metal than this game? If you're a fan of the genre, you'll delight in all references, not to mention a soundtrack packed full of classics. Also, it stars Jack Black as Eddie Riggs.



### PRETTY COLOURS

#### PLAY: CHILD OF EDEN

It's no Rez, but this music/shooter/experience/whatever-the-hell-you're-supposed-to-call-a-game-like-Child-Of-Eden game, still holds much of the appeal of the PS2 classic.



### CRAPPING YOUR PANTS

#### PLAY: DEAD SPACE 2

A game with a masterful understanding of the importance of using breaks in action to build tension, *Dead Space 2* is an intelligent and terrifying horror game. Do not wear your best underwear.



### JOURNEY

#### PLAY: FLOWER

Before the critically acclaimed *Journey*, thatgamecompany made the less well-known *Flower*. It's a similarly muted and thoughtful experience about guiding a number of petals on a gentle breeze. Lovely.

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| Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance  | 228   | 9   |
|  |       | <i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre. |
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| Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations  | 217   | 5  |
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| Naughty Bear   | 195   | 6  |
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| NBA 2K13   | 224   | 8  |
| NBA Jam  | 200   | 6  |
| NBA Street: Homecourt  | 151   | 6  |
| Need For Speed Carbon  | 151   | 7  |
| Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit  | 199   | 9  |
| Need For Speed: Most Wanted  | 225   | 9  |
|    |       | <i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.            |
| Need For Speed ProStreet   | 161   | 8  |
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| Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising  | 185   | 7  |
| Operation Flashpoint: Red River  | 205   | 7  |
| The Orange Box   | 161   | 9  |
| Outland  | 207   | 7  |
| OutRun Online Arcade   | 180   | 8  |
| Overlord II  | 181   | 6  |
| Pac-Man Championship Edition DX  | 201   | 9  |
| Pain   | 183   | 6  |
| Payday: The Heist  | 213   | 8  |
| Payday 2   | 235   | 8  |
| Peggle   | 189   | 9  |
| Persona 4 Arena  | 231   | 9  |
|  |       | Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play. |
| Persona 4 Arena Ultimax  | 250   | 9  |
| PES 2012   | 210   | 7  |
| PixelJunk 4am  | 220   | 4  |
| PixelJunk Eden   | 169   | 6  |
| PixelJunk Shooter  | 187   | 9  |
| PixelJunk Shooter 2  | 204   | 9  |
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| PixelJunk Racers   | 160   | 7  |
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| Portal 2   | 205   | 10   |
| Prince Of Persia   | 174   | 8  |
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| Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands  | 193   | 6  |
| Prince Of Persia Trilogy   | 200   | 8  |
| Prison Break: The Conspiracy   | 191   | 4  |
| Prototype  | 181   | 7  |
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| Puddle   | 216   | 7  |
| The Punisher: No Mercy   | 182   | 4  |
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## WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

Watch out! Games!



**WHAT**  
(have they been playing?)

### FFXIV

**WHY** (was it chosen?)

Heavensward is as good a reason as any to return

**LUKE ALBIGÉS**

IT'S BEEN A good while since I last set foot in Eorzea and once again, I find myself with a lot of catching up to do. Chasing the increased level cap will probably be my first port of call, after which I should probably think about upgrading my tanking gear. Having become obsessed with crafting as opposed to dungeoneering, getting back into running instances and raids will likely be a painful process, so I'll be taking this opportunity to move servers as well – I'm still on a US server from way back in the beta days, so it's high time I jumped ship and went to find my real friends.



**WHAT**  
(have they been playing?)

### The Witcher 3

**WHY** (was it chosen?)

Because it's incredible!

**PAUL WALKER-EMIG**

ONE OF MY pet hates when it comes to open world games is when they are packed full of crap that is clearly just there to pad out the game. The thing that I love about *The Witcher 3* is that it takes that approach, bludgeons it with a hammer, and then throws it in the river. Main quests and side quests often interweave naturally and they all have their own story attached that makes them feel worthwhile and adds to your understanding of the world. Given how huge that world is, I'll be chasing down those stories for some time...

\*denotes import review





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